THE THEME OF PROMISE IN THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES

Peddi Victor

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
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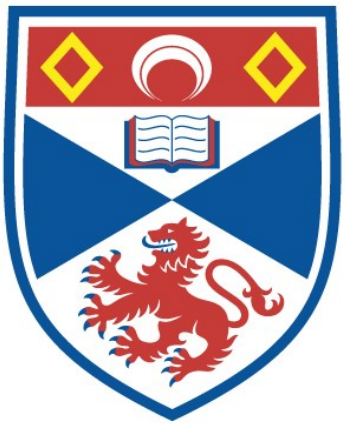
University of St Andrews



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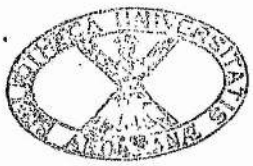

THE THEME OF PROMISE IN THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES

A THESIS BY

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PRESENTED TO

THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

IN APPLICATION FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

The research was carried out by me in St. Mary's College, the University of St. Andrews between 1969 and 1972.

Date : 14th June 1972.

Signature :

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY ME

I was admitted to St. Mary's College, the Faculty of Divinity, University of St. Andrews from 1st October, 1969 under Ordinance General No. 12. I was admitted with retrospective effect from 1st October, 1969, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under Resolution of the University Court 1967, No. 1.

I hereby certify that Mr Reddi Victor has spent eleven terms in research at St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance/Court Resolution and that he is qualified to submit the following thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I complete this thesis and my three years of research studies at the University of St. Andrews, I would like to record my grateful thanks to the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches and the Methodist Missionary Society for making it possible for me to come with my wife and daughter to St. Andrews and to engage in these studies. I also express my thanks to the Principal and the Board of Governors of the Andhra Christian Theological College, Luthergiri, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India, for granting me study leave for this period.

It has been a most enriching and refreshing experience to study in St. Mary's College, under the able guidance of Professor W. McKane and the staff of the Department of Old Testament Studies. My special thanks are due to my Supervisor Dr. J.D. Martin, Lecturer in Old Testament for his valuable criticism, advice and encouragement throughout the period of research and during the time of the completion of this thesis.

I am grateful to my wife for her help in reading through the type scripts.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to Mrs. S. Anderson for typing this thesis and making it possible for me to present it in time.

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, who was the first to introduce me to the fascinating stories of the Old Testament and was responsible for inspiring in me a sense of thrill and wonder at hearing these ancient stories for the first time.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

AB	Analecta Biblica, Rome.
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts, ed. by J.B. Pritchard, 3rd edition with supplement, Princeton 1969.
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem, Leiden.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven.
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge, Bonn.
BDB	Brown, F., Driver, S.R. and Briggs, C.A. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Oxford, 1962.
BHK^3	Biblia Hebraica, 3rd. ed. by R. Kittel, edited by A.Alt and O. Eissfeldt, Stuttgart, 1937.
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, vol. i, Liber Genesis, by O. Eissfeldt, 1969.
BT	Bible Translator, London.
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, Stuttgart.
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift, (New Series from 1957), (Freiberg i. Br.) Paderborn.
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen till 1934, then Berlin.
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington.
EKL	Evangelisches Kirchen Lexikon, vols. i-iv, München.
ET	Expository Times, Edinburgh.
FRLANT	Forschung zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament, ed. O. Eissfeldt, Tübingen.
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, ed. W. Nowack, Göttingen.
HThR	Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge (Mass.).
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual, Cincinati.

ICC	International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh.
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, New York-Nashville, 1962.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal, Jerusalem.
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society, Jerusalem.
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies, Manchester.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford.
KHAT	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament, Leipzig and Tübingen.
KS	Kleine Schriften.
LXX	Greek Translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint).
MT	Massoretic Text.
NEB	New English Bible.
NTT	Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift, Wageningen.
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën, Leiden.
PAAJR	Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, Philadelphia.
RGG	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, Tübingen, 2nd. ed. 1927-1932, and 3rd. ed. 1957-1963.
RHR	Revue de l'Historie des Religions, Paris.
RSV	Revised Standard Version.
ש	Samaritan Pentateuch.
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibel-Studien, Stuttgart.
S	Peshitta.
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology, London.
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology, Edinburgh.
Sch.Th.U	Schweizerische Theologische Umschau, Bern.
St.Th.	Studia Theologica, Lund, Aarhus.
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, Leiden.

TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel, Tr. G.W. Bromiley, Michigan, 1964f.
TGUOS	Transactions of Glasgow University Oriental Society, Glasgow.
Th.B	Theologische Bücherei, Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert.
Th.Bl.	Theologische Blätter, Leipzig.
TT	Theology Today, Princeton.
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung, Leipzig.
ThWAT	Theologische Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, Stuttgart.
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift, Basel
U Pent	M. Noth, Uberlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch, Stuttgart, 1948.
VT	Vetus Testamentum, Leiden.
WC	Westminster Commentaries, London.
WuD	Wort und Dienst, Bethel.
WZ Halle	Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl Marx Universität, Halle-Wittenberg
WZ Leipzig	Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl Marx Universität, Leipzig.
ZAW	Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen till 1934, then Berlin.
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Leipzig.

SUMMARY

The scholarly discussion of the patriarchal narratives, initiated by Wellhausen in terms of the particularity of the religion of Israel, was given a new direction by Gunkel, who interpreted them in relation to a wider international culture. Gunkel focussed attention on the literary aspect of the patriarchal narratives and considered the theology in them to be the work of later, pious collectors and not an integral part of the narratives themselves. Alt, by examining the tradition-history of patriarchal religion, emphasized the importance of the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives in relation to the cultural transition of the early pre-Israelite tribes from a nomadic culture to the sedentary culture of Canaan. Alt's thesis has been developed further from at least three different points of view : (i) Tradition history (Noth, Jepsen, Seebass and Hoftijzer), (ii) Literary formation (von Rad and Rost), and (iii) Pre-Israelite religion (Eissfeldt, Maag and Engnell). Bright, representing the American archaeological school (Albright and Wright), emphasizes the historicity of the patriarchs but does not sufficiently take into account the tradition-history of the patriarchal narratives and thus does not give much attention to the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives. A new element is introduced into the discussion of the theme of 'promise' in the works of Zimmerli and Westermann. Zimmerli observes the five fold use of the root ברך in Gen. 12, 1-3 and points out that here an unhistorical idea is historicized by the Yahwist. Westermann elaborates further upon this theme and emphasizes that the theme of promise has developed out of an original blessing-concept in the patriarchal narratives.

An exegetical survey of the promise-blessing passages in the patriarchal narratives with a view to understanding their form and content, leads to two important conclusions : (a) There is a regular promise pattern in

the patriarchal narratives in the form of 'command - promise - blessing'. These three elements represent three features of the religions and cultures in relation to which Israelite religion developed, namely, the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers', the Canaanite El-religion and the Sinai-Exodus Yahwism. This promise pattern is very prominent in the Yahwist, but the element of blessing is either omitted or transformed by the Elohist because of his less enthusiastic attitude towards Canaan, its culture and religion. This promise pattern is also employed by P. (b) Promise and blessing are given in at least four different contexts : (i) strife, (ii) death of the father, (iii) marriage, and (iv) journey. Promise and blessing, given in these contexts are joined together to form a comprehensive promise complex, which is repeated again and again in the patriarchal narratives, although some of the promises do not correspond to the situation of need or tension narrated in the story.

The development of the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives may be understood in terms of the cultural transition of the pre-Israelite tribes from a nomadic culture to a sedentary culture, and a corresponding transition from a religion in which God is related to a people, to a religion in which God is bound to a place. Nomadic religion is a religion of promise, while the religion of a sedentary people is associated with the idea of blessing. Both of these religions had positive elements and also their own limitations. A combination of these two with Yahwism, a religion associated with divine command, led to a lessening of limitations in the three of them and to a development of their positive ideas, in the present patriarchal narratives. The theme of promise could also be regarded as developing within the historical circumstances of Israel in the periods during which J, E and P are thought to have been written, that is the Davidic-Solomonic period, the reign of Rehoboam I and the Exile. Faced with the problems relating to cultural confrontation, these writers went

back to the patriarchal traditions and reinterpreted them for their contemporaries, because they looked upon the patriarchal traditions as the first experience of the people of God in their encounter with other religions and cultures. These different authors have left their marks upon the theology of the patriarchal narratives. The three main elements of the promise pattern 'command - promise - blessing', have influenced each other and have thereby developed a new understanding of the God of Israel.

C O N T E N T S

S E C T I O N - I : A survey of the different approaches to the patriarchal narratives with special reference to the theme of 'Promise'.

A. Beginning of the scholarly discussion on the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives.

(1) HERMANN GUNKEL inaugurates a new era in the critical study of the patriarchal narratives. He shared with the Göttingen Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,[1] his enlarged view of the international religous and cultural background of the Israelite religion. In his book Schöpfung und Chaos,[2] Gunkel emphasized the importance of the Babylonian religious and mythological background for the interpretation of the Primeval history in Gen. 1-11. Thereby he introduced a new dimension of exegesis, a new depth in asking questions about the background. Gunkel has the same approach to the patriarchal narratives in the first edition of his commentary on Genesis.[3] This was a new departure from Wellhausen, who held that the Israelite religion had developed in isolation from the other religions of the ancient Near East, and within its own sphere from primitive origins to more elevated religious ideas.[4] For Gunkel, the patriarchal narratives do not reflect the cultural attainment or communal consciousness of the early Israelites nor are they a retrojection from the later period. They do not have anything particular or distinctive as compared with the myths of other peoples. They belong to the international culture of the ancient Near East which the Israelites took over after their settlement in Canaan.[5] Here Gunkel represents the true spirit of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, who altogether discounted the special revelation and interpreted it as part of the general history. There was no place for special revelation, it was dissolved into general

universal history. Wellhausen criticized Gunkel for this attitude and called him a 'leveller' of all religions. Klatt comments that although Gunkel was suspicious of supernaturalism, he did not completely abandon the concept of revelation, he understood it not supernaturally but historically. Revelation was regarded as extending to the whole of history and to all religions.[6] But the patriarchal narratives did not offer Gunkel the same possibilities for Religionsgeschichte as did the Primeval history, and therefore he emphasized more the literary and aesthetic aspects of the patriarchal sagas.[7] In his third edition[8], Gunkel, inspired by Gressmann, gives up his 'Myth' theory and employs the 'Märchen' theory, according to which the Israelites originally belonged to the semi-nomadic culture of their ancestors, who owned flocks and herds and lived on the southern and eastern edges of the Kulturland. Thus the international range of their myths is narrowed down to the Canaanite semi-nomadic Märchen.

The most striking feature common to Gunkel's first edition of 'Genesis' (Myths) and the third edition (Märchen), from the point of view of Religionsgeschichte, is the separation of literature and religious ideas as belonging to different stages of the development of the patriarchal traditions. Gunkel valued the original stories as products of imagination and artistic poetic skill, devoid of any religious ideas. The religious ideas were subsequently overlaid upon the originally simple literary sagas, as expression of later piety. It was the collectors of these sagas and not their creators, nor those who recounted them, who were responsible for incorporating religious ideas into them. The original authors were interested in aesthetic values and artistic expression for the entertainment of their hearers but had no intentions of religious edification or piety.[9] Thus Gunkel postulated a dichotomy

between Literaturgeschichte and Religionsgeschichte. The only exception to this is Gunkel's agreement with Gressmann[10] that the patriarchs were the worshippers of the deity El, in their semi-nomadic stage and that this was a superior kind of religion to that of the god Baal of Canaan.[11] Apart from this the original patriarchal stories are destitute of religious value for Gunkel.

The other important contribution of Gunkel to the study of the patriarchal narratives is his distinction between saga and history. According to Gunkel, the patriarchal narratives are not historical accounts but sagas (Sagen),[12] which are altogether different in form and function from the former. (1) The Saga exists originally as an oral tradition, whereas history is in written form. The Saga is the tradition of a circle which is not accustomed to writing; historiography presupposes writing. (2) They have different spheres of interest - Historiography is concerned with great public affairs, Saga, on the other hand, is interested in what is personal and private. Even in places where Saga deals with political affairs and personalities, it draws them into the sphere of popular interest. (3) Historiography is guaranteed by sources or eye-witnesses, but Saga is created out of the phantasy of the narrator and is based upon tradition. (4) Historiography prides itself in its veracity, Saga reports what is incredible. (5) History is written in prose, Saga is in a poetic form.[13] Further, Gunkel emphasizes the sociological aspect in the formation of the Saga[14], that it is a popular narrative and, as such, expresses not only the thoughts and feelings of those who had composed it, but also the views of the whole circle among whom it originated and was narrated. It is the common property of the whole circle. Each Saga has a clear beginning and an easily recognizable conclusion. It is dominated by one single mood. But these features

have been damaged or changed when the individual Sagas were combined into great literary constructions. Gunkel identifies a special kind of Saga called the 'historical Saga', in which historical events are narrated. However, these historical circumstances are not of the events which the Sagas report but of the period in which they are narrated.[15] Although they deal with the historical period prior to the Settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, they in fact reflect circumstances subsequent to the Settlement. Therefore they do not contain historiography but only the history of the tradition.

Here two comments may be made about Gunkel's approach to the patriarchal narratives in terms of the theme of 'Promise'. (i) Gunkel does not discuss in detail the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal Sagas. He was more interested in identifying the literary Gattung of the individual narratives and thus did not give much attention to the thematic aspects of the patriarchal Sagas.[16] But in agreement with his view on the theology of the patriarchal Sagas, he considers that the Sagas which speak of divine favour to men belong to a much later period than those which do not have any reference to moral or religious ideas.[17] As a theological concept, 'Promise', for Gunkel, is the result of the work of the collectors and does not form the original content of the Sagas. It is interesting to note that although Gunkel started from a religio-historical point of view, namely that revelation is part of general history, he later arrives at the conclusion that theology is separated from literature. The view that the patriarchal narratives received their theological and religious ideas at the hands of the pious collectors and that these ideas were originally not part of the tradition, tends to weaken the theological importance of the patriarchal narratives. Theology becomes relative in that it does not belong to the essential content of

the original sagas. In this view Gunkel was perhaps influenced by his critics, who said that he was a 'leveller' of all religions, and tries to pacify them by emphasizing that the religion of Israel was particularly different from the ancient traditions and that the theological element had been added by the pious collectors. (ii) Gunkel's traditio-historical method liberated the whole discussion of the patriarchal narratives from the historical plane to a more fruitful study of the history of the traditions. It is no longer the historicity of the patriarchs that is under consideration, but the history of the traditions as they progressed in the course of the history of the people who had preserved and transmitted them. Thereby the present patriarchal narratives acquire a new dimension, that of pre-history, whose traces and impressions can still be perceived in the extant text. This approach has been followed by Alt and others making important contribution to the study of the theme 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives.

(2) ALBRECHT ALT employs the traditio-historical method of Gunkel to study the religion of the pre-Israelite tribes, in his essay 'The God of the Fathers'[18], and comes to the conclusion that it was different from that of later Yahwism. The present patriarchal narratives in Genesis represent for him, the end stage of a long process of oral transmission, complex growth and development before they were finally committed to writing. The patriarchal narratives still reflect the stages through which the religion of Israel had developed. Alt, like Gunkel, adheres to the documentary sources of the Wellhausen school and examines the individual sources with a view to understanding the development of the religion of the patriarchs. Alt finds three types of religion reflected in the patriarchal narratives, representing the three stages through which the religion of Israel had passed : (i) The worship of the

'god(s) of fathers', (ii) El-worship, and (iii) Yahweh-worship. In the conclusion of his essay, Alt discusses the place of 'Promise' in relation to these three stages in the growth of Israelite religion.

(i) The worship of the 'god(s) of the fathers'.

In Ex. 3,6.13-15 the Elohist points out that the god worshipped by the patriarchs was designated as אלהי אברהם ואלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב and that the name יהוה was revealed to Moses for the first time,[19] indicating thereby, a difference between the religion of the patriarchs and the Mosaic Yahwism of Israel. The Elohist introduces the designation, the 'god of the fathers' in the Jacob story (Gen. 31, 5b, 29b, 42a, 53a). The Yahwist, who emphasized throughout that the name Yahweh was known from the very beginning, does not note this change here. But in the stories of the patriarchs he refers to the 'God of Abraham' in the Isaac story (26,24) and the 'God of Abraham and the God of Isaac' in the Jacob story (Gen. 28, 13).[20] The Priestly writing also points to the same distinction, when it gives the name of the God of the pre-Mosaic period as אל שדי, and יהוה as the name of the deity revealed for the first time to Moses (Ex. 6,3). The three sources of Genesis in their own way point to a basic difference between the patriarchal and the Mosaic religions. This is also attested by the fact that no names compounded with the theophoric element 'Yahweh' appear in the pre-Mosaic period.[21]

Alt finds the old proper names for the 'God of Isaac' and the 'God of Jacob', in the tradition, פחד יצחק (Gen. 31, 42, 53) and אביר יעקב (Gen. 49, 24).[22] For the name of the 'God of Abraham', he conjectures on the basis of Gen. 15,1, that it might have been מגן אברהם.[23] These three names represent three different gods of the pre-Israelite tribes before they entered into Palestine. Alt thinks that there were several other gods of the fathers, but that out of them only a few had

survived in the course of the development of the religion of Israel[24]. But these special names have been glossed over by a peculiarly Israelite word for God, אלהים [25]. Thus they are usually referred to as 'the God of Abraham'[26], the 'God of Isaac' and the 'God of Jacob'. In this type of religion, the deity is not bound to a place but moves with his people and is designated by the common name for God compounded with the name of the founder of the cult, to whom the deity had first granted his revelation. This religion of the 'god(s) of the fathers' was the religion of the pre-Israelite nomadic tribes before they entered Canaan. Alt finds parallels to such a religion of the 'god(s) of the fathers' in the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions, in which the deity is named in association with the name of the ancestor of the people, who was considered to be the recipient of the revelation of the god and the founder of his cult. These deities are אלהי קצין, Θεὸς Αὔμου and Θεὸς Ἀρκεσιλάου [27].

(ii) El-worship

The gods worshipped in Canaan before the immigration of the pre-Israelite tribes were Elim. The names of these El-deities are still found in Genesis. They are connected with cultic places and each of them had their own ἱεροὶ λόγοι, which described the revelation of the deity in that place and the founding of the particular sanctuary. When the pre-Israelite tribes entered Canaan, they introduced the traditions about their gods into these cultic places and transferred the local ἱεροὶ λόγοι to their ancestors. These stories had been recounted at the Canaanite sanctuaries taken over by Israel for a long time before they were connected with the god(s) of the fathers. Alt illustrates this by drawing attention to the way in which the Bethel story is told by the Yahwist and the Elohist (Gen. 28, 13-16, 21(?). 19(J); 28,11-12.

20. 22(E)). The Yahwist treats it as a revelation of the God of Abraham and Isaac and makes the speech of the deity who appears, the climax of the whole story. This lacks all the characteristic features of the old cultic Saga of the El Bethel. But the Elohist, on the other hand, preserves the old features of the saga intact. Alt says that this was the first Israelite stage, when the taking over of the local El-sanctuaries was expressed by the Israelites bringing their ancestors into relation with these sanctuaries and representing them as recipients of the revelations of the local numina and as the founders of these cults. In course of time a few amongst them attracted worshippers from other sanctuaries and this process gradually led to the genealogical connexion between the different patriarchs.[28] In this way the worship of the gods of the fathers was introduced into Canaan and its El-religion.

(iii) Yahweh-Worship

The second Israelite stage was when the Gods of the fathers, localized at different Canaanite sanctuaries, were identified with Yahweh, after the union of the Israelite tribes was accomplished. Alt thinks that for a time the worship of Yahweh existed side by side with the worship of the gods of the fathers, even after the former had attained the status of an all-Israelite religion. Later, Yahwism penetrated into the different sanctuaries and replaced the deities worshipped there. This was made possible because the characteristics of the gods of the fathers were similar to those of Yahweh. They both had the idea of a relationship between God and man, and God and whole groups of men, and neither of them had any fixed association with a place[29]. Historically this process could be seen as the encroachment of the national cult of Yahweh upon the local sanctuaries. Thus Alt says that the gods of the fathers were παιδαγωγοί leading the early pre-Israelite tribes to the

greater God, Yahweh[30].

Alt points to the choosing of the patriarchs as another important feature of the religion of the gods of the fathers, existing side by side with the choosing of Israel by Yahweh at the time of Moses. Alt rejects Galling's suggestion that the patriarchal tradition of choosing was an artificial construction by the literary editors (J or L), as a secondary imitation of the choosing of Israel by Yahweh.[31] He emphasizes that choosing is an essential feature of the religion of the gods of the fathers as well and that, therefore, there is no need to consider it to be a later imitation of the choosing of Israel by Yahweh. The names of the numina 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' point to this close association, into which these gods had, of their own choice, entered, with certain men and their descendants.[32] This theme of the election of the patriarchs is expressed by the literary editors through a speech containing both a revelation and a promise by Yahweh. Here Alt draws attention to the fact that the names of the gods of the fathers regularly appear wherever there is a promise made to the patriarchs, but that the Canaanite Elim are never mentioned in this connexion. Further, Alt points out that the frequently recurring theme of the theophanies, namely that the patriarchs would possess the land of Canaan in the future, could have been easily connected with the local deities of Palestine[33], but that this did not take place, as the literary editors were conscious that 'the function of choosing and blessing[34]' belonged to the 'gods of the fathers' and not to the local Elim. There seems to be a certain difficulty here in that Alt fails to take account of the fact that the deity אל שדי is connected with promise in P (Gen. 17, 1-7) and the fact that he himself had equated El Shaddai with the local Elim and had indicated that it had been originally connected with a place but that this

connection had been lost in the course of transmission[35].

The promises, according to Alt, are exclusively connected with two important matters, posterity and land. The promise of posterity is the main concern of nomads, and the promise of land is the main concern of settlers. The promise of posterity was given during the nomadic period before the pre-Israelite tribes entered Canaan, and the land-promise was given within Canaan itself.

Alt makes a significant advance over Gunkel in assessing the relation of theology to the patriarchal traditions. For Gunkel the original patriarchal narratives do not have any theological content, they are artistic creations, intended for entertainment and pleasure. It was only later that the theological ideas were introduced into them by the collectors, as an expression of their piety. But, for Alt, the theme of 'Promise' was already in existence in the cultic traditions of the pre-Israelite tribes before their entry into Canaan. 'Promise' was related to the daily concerns of the pre-Israelite tribes. The promise of posterity originated in the nomadic concern for numerous descendants, and the concern of the settler for land gave rise to the land-promise. Thus there is no dichotomy between tradition and theology, they both develop together within the context of the tensions of the semi-nomadic and sedentary ways of life.

Various objections have been raised in subsequent years with regard to Alt's view of the origin of the patriarchal promises. Vriezen objects to Alt's explanation that the desire for posterity is a typical concern of the nomadic peoples, because this desire is also found in the Ugaritic texts which represent a settled people. Vriezen himself prefers to consider it as a common human motif, and found, as such, amongst all peoples.[36] R.E. Clements asks how it could be conceived that a

nomadic god could promise a land which did not belong to him at all. He argues that the natural presupposition of a convenant tradition, in which a god promises land to his worshipper, is that the land belongs to that deity.[37] Both the gods of the fathers and Yahweh are from regions outside Palestine and therefore it is difficult to attribute to them the promise of a land that did not belong to them. The promise of land presupposes a deity of settled land rather than a nomadic deity or one who is located in a desert outside Palestine. Alt does not concede any connexion between the concept of 'Promise' and the El deities, and this makes it difficult to maintain his position in view of the above criticism. Eissfeldt, on the other hand, argues that it is the Canaanite Elim who granted promises to the patriarchs.[38] Gemser also seems to imply that the Elim are connected with the giving of promises to the patriarchs.[39]

Alt's hypothesis of the patriarchal religion has been generally accepted, although in some cases with certain modifications, by most subsequent writers on the patriarchs and their religion.[40] Alt has made a significant contribution to the study of the pre-Mosaic religion by tracing the different stages of its tradition history. However, it may be pointed out that he has not sufficiently accounted for the relationship between the religion of the gods of the fathers and that of the Elim.[41] He does not discuss the cultural and theological tensions which would result in such an association between the religions of nomadic and sedentary peoples. Further, Alt does not take into account the promise complexes which appear in the patriarchal narratives. He conceives of only two promises, whereas certain other promises are also reported in Genesis. For example the promise of protection on the way (Gen. 28, 15), the promise that אל שדי would be the God of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17, 7) and the promise of blessing (Gen. 12,2; 26,3.24), appear

in association with the promise of posterity and land. Jepsen criticizes Alt for his generalizing tendency in observing only two promises of posterity and land in the revelation of the gods of the fathers.[42] This limitation was set partly by his aim, which was to enquire into patriarchal religion. His whole emphasis was on the investigation into the religion of the patriarchs, and only towards the end of his essay does he dwell briefly upon the theme of 'Promise' and its Sitz im Leben in the patriarchal narratives. He does not go into the tradition history of 'Promise' itself, although this would perhaps have given a clue to the explanation of the presence of other promises. However, Alt himself does not claim to have exhausted all the implications of his thesis when at the close of his essay he says that he leaves it to his reader to search the Sagas of Genesis for further effects of the conceptions and outlook found in the religion of the god of the fathers.[43] If Gunkel is the initiator of a new era in the study of the patriarchal narratives, Alt could perhaps be considered as the initiator of the discussion of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives. Indeed there were others before him who had drawn attention to this theme,[44] but they did not associate the theme with the original patriarchal tradition but regarded it only as a later extension or imitation of the Exodus promise tradition. It was Alt's method which led to fruitful research in subsequent years.

B. Development of the theme of 'Promise' on the basis of Alt.

The main thesis of Alt, that the pre-Israelite tribes were worshippers of the god(s) of the fathers and that their ancestors received promises of posterity and land from these deities, has been carried forward in the works of subsequent writers on the patriarchal narratives. Most of them agree with Alt to a large extent about the religion of the fathers,

but the theme of 'Promise' to the patriarchs has been developed further from at least three different points of view : (i) the history of tradition with special reference to the pre-literary period, (ii) the literary formation, especially by the Yahwist, and (iii) the religion of the pre-Israelite tribes.[45]

(a) Development of the theme of 'Promise' from the point of view of the history of tradition.

(1) MARTIN NOTH follows Gunkel's traditio-historical method in drawing out a detailed tradition history of both the patriarchal sagas and the figures represented in them,[46] and traces the development of the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs', in relation to the other Pentateuchal themes. Like Alt, Noth regards the patriarchs as founders of the cults of the 'god(s) of the fathers' and recipients of revelations and promises from these deities, long before their descendants immigrated into Canaan.[47] Thus the patriarchs themselves do not belong to Canaan, they were semi-nomads living on edges of the arable land, during which time they had received divine revelations and promises. Their descendants, after their settlement in Canaan, established these cults of the gods of the fathers at the Canaanite sanctuaries and incorporated them into the ἱεροὶ λόγοι of those sanctuaries and regarded their own occupation of the land as the fulfilment of the promise made to their ancestors by their special 'gods of the fathers'. Noth observes that because these traditions were brought from outside Canaan, no historical information is available about them. Original traditions about the patriarchs and their gods were concerned more with the promises than with their persons as historical figures.[48] Noth agrees with Alt that there were perhaps originally many other traditions of the gods of the fathers and patriarchs connected

with different tribes but that these have been lost in the course of transmission. For example, there are no special traditions about the fathers of the tribes of Judah and of the Galilean tribes.[49] The recognition that the promises made to their ancestors by their special deities, were fulfilled by the settlement of their descendants in Canaan brought prestige to the patriarchal traditions, so that these traditions formed an important theme of the credal affirmation of the twelve-tribe amphictyonic centre at Shechem. Noth postulates the existence of a twelve-tribe amphictyony in Shechem in the pre-monarchical period, which was the rallying point for the Israelite tribes united in the worship of Yahweh.[50] The credal affirmations of this amphictyony contained five main Pentateuchal themes : (i) the leading out of Egypt, (ii) the leading into Canaan, (iii) the promise to the patriarchs, (iv) the leading in the desert, and (v) the revelation at Sinai.[51] Of these, the theme 'Promise to the fathers' is connected with the first two themes, the leading out of Egypt and the leading into Canaan, in so far as they are understood to be the fulfilment of the promises made to the patriarchs. Thus the original fulfilment to the patriarchs was dropped in order to relate the promises to their later fulfilment in the Settlement. The connexion with the other two themes, 'the leading in the desert' and 'the revelation at Sinai', was made possible through the identification of the 'gods of the fathers' of the patriarchal tradition with Yahweh, who had not only led Israel out of Egypt into the arable land, but had also led them in the desert and had revealed his will to them at Sinai.[52] Through this process of connecting the themes of the entire Pentateuch from the beginning to the end, the basic promise-fulfilment scheme was formed in order to theologize its contents. The themes themselves, in their origin, were much older than the Israelite amphictyony and had a

limited significance, but they are now made to stand in the Pentateuch in a total Israelite context.

Further, Noth points out that the patriarchal tradition represented by the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs' itself had a complex tradition history and progressed in several stages. At first only Jacob was indirectly connected with the other Pentateuchal themes, as is indicated in Deut. 26, 5-9.[53] Jacob was originally associated with the House of Joseph, which is shown by the fact that the 'God of Jacob' was originally worshipped in the Joseph tribe. But Jacob, as the father who received divine promises for his descendants, became the ancestor of the whole of Israel and the father of the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. Noth distinguishes two stages in the growth of the Jacob traditions - traditions about the west-Jordan Jacob and traditions about the east-Jordan Jacob. The west-Jordan traditions belonging to the mid-Palestinian tribes were originally centred in Shechem and later moved to Bethel.[54] It was the tribe of Ephraim, who moved from the west of the Jordan to the east and colonized Gilead, that brought these Jacob-traditions with them, traditions which were originally centred at Bethel, the most important sanctuary in their tribal area. The east-Jordan Jacob is a more worldly figure than the west-Jordan Jacob, who is connected with cult and with credal affirmations.[55] The east-Jordan Jacob stories contain two distinct traditions - the Jacob-Laban traditions[56] and the Jacob-Esau traditions.[57] Laban represents the Aramaeans, whom the colonizing Ephraimites encountered in the east and with whom they made treaties in connexion with pasture lands and water holes. The Jacob-Esau story, on the other hand, is located both in the east and in the west. It is a story which reflects the cultural stages through which the Ephraimites had passed, from a hunting culture to a pastoral culture and from a pastoral culture to an

agricultural one. The Jacob-Esau and the Jacob-Laban traditions are skilfully combined by a 'flight' motif. These combined east-Jordan Jacob traditions were later connected with the west-Jordan traditions at Bethel in such a manner that they appear as an interlude in the life of Jacob, who came from the central west-Jordan area and returned there after a long interval.[58] Noth thinks that the story perhaps concluded with an account of the death of Jacob and did not contain the tradition of Jacob's journey to Egypt and his death there. The blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48, 8ff) also originally belonged to the west-Jordan traditions and has been secondarily moved to Egypt.

Similarly Abraham and Isaac were founders of the cult of the god(s) of the fathers who received promises of land and posterity which were later fulfilled for their descendants in south Palestine. Thus the worship of the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac was established at sanctuaries in that area. Noth thinks that of the two, the traditions of Isaac were older than those of Abraham.[59] The Isaac traditions (Gen. 26) belong to an earlier cultural stage than those of Abraham and earlier even than those of the west-Jordan Jacob.[60] They reflect a period when the pre-Israelite tribes in the south were in contact with the inhabitants of the settled land in areas which they used for summer pastures but had not themselves assumed the style of sedentary life. Isaac not only received the promise of land as a גר but also took the first steps towards its realization by tasting the blessing of the arable land and by acquiring rights of water places from the settled population. As such, his cult was practised by semi-nomads in the south.[61] The original centre of the Isaac traditions, according to Noth, was Beer-Lahai-Roi, where the worshippers of the God of Isaac shared the sanctuary with the Ishmaelites (Gen. 16, 13f., J). This is the place where Isaac

is said to have dwelt before famine forced him to go to Gerar (Gen. 24,62; 25, 11b., J).[62]

The Abraham traditions, now attached to the tree sanctuary at Hebron, had originally belonged to the Negeb, where they came into contact with the Isaac and the Ishmaelite traditions.[63] When Abraham became the principal ancestor, his traditions together with those of Isaac and Ishmael were introduced to the central sanctuary of the six-tribes at Hebron. Here the Abraham traditions came into connexion with the Lot stories and the story about the destruction of Sodom, which had no intrinsic connexion with the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs'.[64] Still later, the local phenomenon of the double cave (מכפלה) gave rise to the popular story about the burial of Sarah by Abraham (Gen. 23). This story was originally only in oral form and was given its literary form by P.[65] The Elohistic story of Gen. 22, 1-19 was also originally not connected with Abraham and did not contain the name of the son, but when it was connected with Abraham, Isaac was named as the son. Later these Abraham-Isaac traditions were connected with the traditions of Jacob in the mid-Palestinian region, with the traditions of the twelve-tribe amphictyony, and Isaac was made the father of Jacob.[66] In the growth of the tradition, the genealogical connection of the patriarchs was effected by the descendants, who believed that their occupation of the land was a fulfilment of the promises made by God to their ancestors. Thus the origin, the growth and the development of the patriarchal traditions was dependent on the theme of the promise of the land to the patriarchs.

Noth presupposes an entirely new scheme of the Wellhausenian documentary sources J, E and P in the Pentateuch[67], which has a far reaching significance for understanding the origin of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives. J, E and P are not schools but individual

writers with special theological view-points of their own, and yet they are closely bound by the traditions which are handed over to them.[68] The works of the Yahwist and the Elohist are based upon a common source G (Grundlage), which contained the main Pentateuchal themes connected with the early Israelite amphictyony. But Noth feels unable to decide whether G was in an oral or a written form.[69] The Elohist, with the absence of both the Primeval history and the Hebron traditions of Abraham, is nearer to the older traditions than the Yahwist,[70] but is preserved in a very fragmentary fashion in the present text. Noth thinks that E belongs to the south (Gen. 22, 1ff.; Ex. 18, 1ff.,) and that it is not later than the Davidic-Solomonic empire.[71] The main theological idea of the Elohist is that God has guided the pre-history of Israel from the journey of Abraham to the promised land till the time of the return of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan (Gen. 15, 13-16; 50,20).[72] Noth also assigns the Yahwist to the period of the Davidic-Solomonic empire.[73] Noth in agreement with Von Rad, attributes to the Yahwist the prefacing of the patriarchal narratives with the primeval history. But while Von Rad emphasizes that the primeval history broadens the horizons of the patriarchal narratives and that it provides an aetiology for the history of salvation, Noth says that the primeval history was introduced to present a theology of man. Man wanted to be like God, was disobedient to God and was living in a world subjected to the curse of God, but God, on the other hand, works out the future salvation of the whole of mankind through Israel as his instrument. This is clearly defined in Gen. 12, 1-3, according to which, God is planning not curse but deliverance (Salvation) and blessing. The same idea is expressed in Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. Men in the world can be saved only through God's salvation and not through any righteousness of their own.[74]

As for P, Noth accepts the common view that it was written during the Babylonian Exile. The non-cultic ritual observances of the Sabbath rest and the rite of circumcision point to this later date.[75] However, Noth rejects the idea that it is the work of priests.[76] There are no indications of priestly interests in P; it concerns itself, rather with questions and matters important for a cultic community. As for promise, Noth says that P mentions the promise of land to Abraham (Gen. 17, 8a; 28,4; Ex. 6,4) along with the promise of descendants, since these things are closely connected together in the old tradition, although P himself did not intend to say anything further about the fulfilment of this promise, namely the settlement of the Israelite tribes.[77] The theology of P is found especially in the concept of the 'Tent of meeting' (אהל מועד). P thereby emphasizes the transcendence of God in order to correct the Jerusalem priestly concept that the presence of Yahweh is found only in the Jerusalem Temple, which was influenced by the Canaanite idea of the Temple as the dwelling place of God. P takes this concept of the אהל מועד from Num. 11,16(J) and transfers it to the Jerusalem Temple. He excludes the theme of the Settlement altogether in his work, as everything necessary had already happened with the establishment of the אהל מועד and the constitution of the twelve tribes at Sinai. The transition to Canaan did not contribute anything important to this concept.[78]

Thus for Noth, the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs' was already formulated before the period of the Judges and was related to the other Pentateuchal themes. It had acquired an all-Israelite status and formed a part of the credal confession of the twelve-tribe amphictyony.[79] The literary fixation did not alter the traditions very much. Except for the incorporation of the special theological view-points of the authors, the main Pentateuchal themes were handed over faithfully. John Bright

asks whether such an all-Israelite orientation of the traditions and the adoption of normative Yahwism could be conceived of at so early a date as the period of the Judges.[80] Similarly, G.E. Wright asks how the period of Judges could be considered to be the most creative period in Israelite history, a period in which no creative personalities are attested in the Biblical account.[81] Moreover, Noth's view does not account for the different problems connected with promise dealt with in the narratives, which von Rad sees as a hermeneutical extension of the original traditions to suit the new changing times.[82]

Noth, like von Rad, emphasizes the promise of the land as the major promise in the tradition history of the patriarchal narratives, and does not give equal importance to the promise of posterity.[83] He places them both in the pre-Palestinian period, but he does not take note of the other promise elements in the patriarchal narratives. The detailed tradition history of the different patriarchal figures does not have much connexion with the theme of promise. The circumstances in which the promises are received are not emphasized, except for the fact that all the patriarchs had received the promise of land and that their descendants considered these promises to have been fulfilled by their own occupation of the land of Canaan. Noth does not see the promises developing out of a situation of need as does Westermann[84], and, as a result, not all the elements of promise in the narratives are discussed by Noth.

(2) ALFRED JEPSEN, like Alt and Noth, analyses the tradition history of the patriarchal narratives, but reaches entirely different conclusions regarding the patriarchs and the theme of 'Promise'. He examines the references to localities associated with the patriarchs and comes to the conclusion that originally Jacob belonged to the east-Jordan area, Isaac

to Beersheba and Abraham to Hebron. He suggests further that the Jacob traditions were originally fostered in the clan of Reuben[85], the Isaac traditions in the Joseph tribe and the Abraham traditions amongst the Calebites.[86]

The Jacob tradition begins, for Jepsen, with the narrative of the fight of Jacob with a deity at the ford of Jabbok. This is the account of the revelation to Jacob, who founded the cult of the אביר יעקב. The localization of the traditions of Jacob in Penuel, Mahanaim and Succoth points to the subsequent settlement of the worshippers of the אביר יעקב in these places. Of the two main stories of the traditions of Jacob in east-Jordan, Jepsen considers the Jacob-Esau story to be a free narrative expansion based on the motif of 'two brothers in conflict', which was later interpreted through the equation of Esau with Edom during the conflict of the Israelites with Edom in the 9th century B.C. The Jacob-Laban story, on the other hand, reflects the relationship between the tribe of Reuben and the neighbouring Aramaeans. It is from here that the Jacob traditions subsequently spread to the west-Jordan area and were connected with the sanctuaries of Shecham and Bethel.[87] Jepsen thinks that the אביר יעקב cult from east-Jordan was first attached to the six-tribe coalition of the Leah tribes. The connexion with Shechem was effected by the tribes of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34) and with Bethel perhaps by the tribe of Judah which may have settled around the sanctuary of Bethel and attached the cult of the אב"ר יעקב to that sanctuary. The representation of the six tribes as the sons of Jacob and Leah indicates that the unifying factor for these tribes was the cult of the אביר יעקב. The main feature of the Jacob tradition, according to Jepsen, is 'Blessing'.[88]

The history of the Isaac tradition begins at Beersheba amongst the Joseph tribe, who, according to Jepsen, were worshippers of פחד יצחק.

The revelation to Jacob at Beersheba (Gen. 46, 1-4) is that of the 'God of Isaac'. The promises of this deity are later incorporated into the larger context of the patriarchal history. The promises to Jacob that the 'God of Isaac' would be with him as he went down to Egypt and would bring him back, that Jacob would be made into a great nation and that Joseph would close his eyes at his death, indicate how the Isaac traditions were connected with the Jacob traditions.[89] Joseph was the leader of a tribe in Beersheba, who, having been forced out by the Ishmaelites, moved to Egypt. This tribe took Joseph's name as its designation and adopted פחד יצחק as its tribal god. Later the Joseph tribe moved out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and embraced Yahwism. They then entered Palestine and established an amphictyony on the basis of the unifying religion of Yahwism. This is the reason why the Isaac traditions appear in the northern kingdom. Jepsen points out that the mountains of Israel are called 'the high places of Isaac'; Beersheba is the pilgrimage centre for the northern kingdom in the time of Amos and Hosea, and Elijah goes down to Beersheba from the north. Moreover, in agreement with Zimmerli, Jepsen refers to the fact that although Beersheba was closer to Judah than to Israel, Beersheba did not have much importance for Judah, whereas it had a close association with the northern kingdom. It was through the influence of the Joseph tribes in the establishment of the amphictyony, that Isaac was associated with Jacob in a genealogical connexion, as the father of Jacob and thus received an all-Israelite status. The belief in 'Guidance' is connected with the פחד יצחק cult of the Isaac traditions.[90]

As for the Abraham traditions, Jepsen finds that much has been secondarily added : the endangering of the clan-mother (12, 10-20; 20); tribal sagas concerning Ishmael (16, 1-7. 10-14; 21, 18-21); traditions

relating to Moab and Ammon (19, 30-38); the Isaac narratives (21, 23-34; 22, 1-14. 19) and a Novelle (24). There remain only the Abraham-Lot cycle (13, 2.5-13; 19, 1-20); the vision in ch. 15 and the revelation of the 'God of Abraham' in ch. 18. Of the two revelation narratives in chs. 15 and 18, Jepsen considers the one in ch. 18 to be older than that in ch. 15, because the latter has a more developed theological formation. Thus Jepsen identifies Mamre, the place in which Gen. 18 is set, as the area in which the Abraham tribes had settled and worshipped the 'god of Abraham'. The occupation of Hebron by the Calebites was perhaps originally understood as the fulfilment of the promise of land made to Abraham by the 'god of Abraham', but was secondarily connected with Moses (Num. 14, 24; cf. also Judg. 1, 10.20). The extant Calebite tradition is an aetiological explanation, developed amongst the Judaeans, to explain the strange circumstance that Hebron, the principal city of the Judaean coalition was occupied by the Calebites and not by the Judaeans. Jepsen reconstructs the history of the Abraham tradition as follows : Abraham, a historical figure, lived as a stranger in the area of Hebron and received the promises of land and posterity in a revelation from the 'god of Abraham'. This cult was preserved in the Abraham clan, which was forced out of Hebron to the south by the Ishmaelites. The Abraham clan allied itself with other Semitic nomadic tribes and pressed forward under the leadership of the Calebites to possess the land which had been promised to them by their deity. When later Abraham became the father of all-Israel this promise of land was transferred to the whole of the promised land and thereby the promises to Abraham came to be connected with Moses. The tribe of Judah became the worshipper of the 'god of Abraham' in virtue of its membership of the confederation of tribes at Hebron and made the Calebite Abraham tradition its own. Later Abraham was genealogically

given precedence over the other patriarchs as the father of Isaac and the grandfather of Jacob, when the different tribes were fused together into the nation 'Israel', during the period of the Judaean hegemony in the reign of David. Subsequently, certain traditions of Isaac and Jacob were transferred to Abraham. For example, the story of the endangering of the clan mother was added from the Isaac traditions and the itinerary of Abraham in 12, 6-8 was added from the Jacob traditions. Jepsen identifies the promise of posterity and land as the main characteristic of the cult of the 'god of Abraham'.[91]

Jepsen follows Alt in finding the origin of the patriarchal traditions in the cult. Thus the Jacob traditions are connected with the cult of אביר יעקב , the Isaac traditions with that of the פחד יצחק and the Abraham traditions with that of the 'god of Abraham'. But Jepsen differs from Alt in identifying Abraham as a historical figure, who lived as a stranger in the area of Hebron and there received the revelation and the promises of his particular deity. If the extant patriarchal traditions are based upon cultic traditions, it is not possible to make historical assertions about them. Here Jepsen seems to go beyond the limits of the tradition history. The reconstruction of the Abraham tradition, which he offers, is too imaginative and is not supported by the extant traditions.

In the tradition history of the 'gods of the fathers', Alt conceives of an intermediate stage, when the cults of the gods of the fathers were located at the Canaanite Elim sanctuaries, before they were finally incorporated into Yahwism. This was the period when the patriarchs, who were the founders of the cults of the gods of the fathers, were assigned the ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the local Canaanite sanctuaries and were made the recipients of the revelations of the local deities.[92] Jepsen does not provide for this process of localization at the Canaanite sanctuaries

before Yahwization. This is perhaps because Jepsen does not give sufficient importance to the nomadic stage of the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' at particular places. The traditions of the patriarchs and the religion of the gods of the fathers begin in Canaan. For example, in the case of the cult of the 'God of Abraham', it is already localized in Canaan at Hebron, so that the tradition history of this particular cult is one of wandering away and finally coming back to its original centre. In this way Jepsen does not envisage any cultural or religious tensions connected with the localization of the gods of the fathers.

For Alt, the theological content of the religion of the gods of the fathers is 'Promise'. The promise of posterity was made to the founder of the cult and his clan at a nomadic or semi-nomadic stage, and the promise of land was given when the adherents of this cult became sedentary and when their cult was associated with a sanctuary in a settled territory.[93] Jepsen has an entirely different scheme of the theological characteristics of the cults of the gods of the fathers. He associates the concept of 'Blessing' with the אביר יעקב cult traditions connected with Jacob, 'Guidance' with the פחד יצחק cult traditions connected with Isaac and the 'Promise of posterity and land' with the cult of the 'God of Abraham' traditions connected with Abraham.[94] This division of these concepts to the cultic traditions connected with the different gods of the fathers seems to be arbitrary, because all these features are associated with each of the patriarchs in the extant traditions. There is reference to the idea of blessing in the Abraham and the Isaac traditions. In Gen. 12, 1-3 the promise to Abraham is made in conjunction with a five-fold use of the root ברך. Gen. 14, 18-20, although perhaps from a very late date, includes 'blessing', and the root ברך appears three times in this small section. The stories about Abraham describe how God was with him

and how he became prosperous - prosperity is considered to be the outcome of blessing. In P's account of the blessing of Jacob, the promise given to Abraham is referred to as the blessing which God had bestowed upon Abraham (28, 4 ברכת אברהם). Lohfink points out that the original tradition behind Gen. 17 was a blessing story but that P had revised it in terms of his ברית theology.[95] There is no story in which Abraham blesses Isaac, but the tradition reports that God blessed Isaac after Abraham's death (Gen. 25, 11), and in this way the idea of blessing is associated with the Isaac stories as well. Further, Isaac is acknowledged by Abimelech and his men as having been blessed by God (Gen. 26, 29). As for the theme of 'Guidance', Jacob is guided by God on his journey to Paddan Aram and back (Gen. 28-30). Similarly Abraham is also said to have been guided from Ur of Chaldees to Canaan (Gen. 15, 7).[96] 'Promise' is received by Isaac in Gerar (Gen. 26, 3-4. 24) and also by Jacob on his way to Paddan Aram (Gen. 28, 13-15). Jacob is depicted as appealing to the promises of God in his prayer (Gen. 32, 9.12). The struggle for blessing results in a new name of promise (Gen. 32, 26-29), and, finally, Jacob receives promises while he is on his way to Egypt (46, 1-4).[97] In view of the fact that each of the patriarchs had received the promise of land and posterity, had also received blessing and had experienced the guidance of his particular deity, it is not possible to isolate these concepts and to attribute them separately to the different cults of the gods of the fathers. Perhaps, these features reflect not so much the traditions of the different tribal cults, but rather the different cultural stages through which the pre-Israelite tribes and their cultic traditions had passed. 'Guidance' reflects the nomadic stage[98], 'Blessing', the stage of the settlement in Canaan[99], and 'Promise' derives from the

milieu of the nomadic way of life but has been later connected with 'blessing' by the Yahwist.[100]

The concept of 'Guidance' which Jepsen attributes to the cult of the Isaac traditions is different from that of von Rad, who speaks of it as a secular concept of guidance, in which God's activity is conceived of as hidden in events. For von Rad, 'guidance' theology is the outcome of the liberation of the traditions from the cult in the Davidic-Solomonic period under the influence of the international culture which Israel had experienced during this period. The Yahwist reflects these influences of his age in his account of the patriarchal narratives. But according to Jepsen, the Yahwist himself is responsible for formulating theophany-narratives like the account of the theophany in the Isaac stories (Gen. 26, 2-5. 23-25), and thus Jepsen does not envisage a liberation of the traditions from their cultic associations.[101]

Jepsen is in agreement with von Rad in attributing a major role to the Yahwist in the formulation of the patriarchal narratives, but he completely differs from von Rad in his conclusions. According to von Rad, the Yahwist gives theological unity to the diverse tradition materials through the concept of promise. He does so, not by contributing to the contents of the patriarchal stories, but by providing link-passages, extensions and arrangements of the traditions within the Hexateuchal credal framework, in a promise-fulfilment relationship. The patriarchal promises of land and posterity are held to be fulfilled in the occupation of the land and in the establishment of the Davidic kingdom. The context of the Davidic-Solomonic period is of utmost significance for von Rad's interpretation of the theology of the Yahwist. According to Jepsen, the Yahwist works in the period of Hezekiah, but Jepsen does not spell out the influence of that period upon the Yahwist's construction of

the patriarchal narratives or upon his special theology. Jepsen also differs from von Rad in that he has only the Yahwist as the sole collector and author of early traditions and does not give any room to the other Pentateuchal source E. This is perhaps influenced by the fact that he had placed the work of the Yahwist in so late a period as the reign of Hazekiah.

There is a great movement of the tribes and their traditions in Jepsen's tradition history of the patriarchal narratives, but no consideration is given to the cultural and theological tensions which they had to face in the course of their extended itinerary.

(3) HORST SEEBASS employs the traditio-historical method to examine the patriarchal narratives on the basis of Alt's religion of the 'god(s) of the fathers'. His main thesis is the existence of a separate father 'Israel'.[102] The patriarch Israel is a clan leader whose clan-cult of the 'god of Israel' was fused with the cult of the ancient Canaanite sanctuary of Shechem. Similarly Jacob was another clan leader whose cult of the 'god of Jacob' was fused with the El-Bethel cult of the ancient sanctuary of Bethel. Seebass argues that the original tradition of the naming of Jacob as Israel is preserved in 35,10 (which according to Seebasss belongs to E and not to P[103]) and that the account in 32, 23ff., is a secondary development. The renaming of Jacob as Israel at Bethel is connected with the legitimation of the Bethel cult of the 'god of Jacob' in terms of the Shechem cult of the 'god of Israel'. Thus the original renaming of Jacob was not related to the all-Israelite status of Jacob at all, but rather denoted a clan chieftain 'Israel' and had nothing to do with the later designation of the confederation of the tribes as 'Israel'.[104]

Seebass argues that although the reference to 'father(s)' in the little creed (Deut. 26, 5) has been connected with Jacob and in Josh. 24, 2f., with Abraham, in both cases the father is 'Israel'.[105] It was the patriarch 'Israel' who experienced danger prior to his entry into Canaan (Gen. 35, 3). 'Israel' was the 'father' who had migrated from Mesopotamia, but this was transferred to Abraham, when a genealogical connexion was established between Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-Israel. Jacob, on the other hand, belonged to the trans-Jordan area, the land of the בני קדם, and it was from there that he led his clan to Bethel. The motif for leaving the land has been secondarily connected with the wives of Jacob now that Jacob has been genealogically related to Abraham and Isaac.[106]

The union of the patriarchs Jacob and Israel was possible because they both had common features in their separate traditions. Both had the tradition of the immigration of the father into Canaan, Israel from Mesopotamia and Jacob from east-Jordan. Both the fathers are reported to have founded tree sanctuaries[107] and to have located the cults of their gods of the fathers at the ancient Canaanite sanctuaries, Israel at Shechem and Jacob at Bethel. Both received the promise of land, which was later enlarged to include the promise of posterity consequent upon their union with the Abraham-Isaac traditions. Seebass points out that although Israel and Jacob were separate fathers, they were not genealogically connected as in the case of Abraham and Isaac, because the addition of the Israel traditions did not in any way add to the promise content of the Jacob narratives, and hence they were made into one father. On account of the identification of Jacob with Israel in 35,10, all previous references to Israel were suppressed in order to anticipate this final event.[108] Seebass suggests the period of Jeroboam I as the most probable

period in which the Israel tradition in Shechem must have been connected with the Jacob-Bethel tradition to vindicate the cult of Bethel over against that of Jerusalem.[109]

The Abraham traditions were originally connected with Beersheba and later with Hebron-Mamre and El-Elyon of Jerusalem. The Isaac traditions were at first connected with the Ishmaelites in Beer-Lahai-Roi and later moved with the Isaac group nearer to the settled land and were established at Beersheba. The Abraham-Isaac traditions thus came from a semi-nomadic setting and belonged to the edge of the settled land of Canaan. The promise of posterity is the main element of these traditions (Gen. 12, 2; 13,16; 15,5; 16,10; 18,18; 21,14. 18 ; 26.24), and the promise of land was secondarily added when they were connected with the Jacob-Israel traditions (28,14; 32,13; 46,3). The Abraham-Isaac group had nomadic affinities but were moving towards a sedentary way of life, the Israel group had a precarious nomadic experience before settling down in Shechem (35,3), and, similarly, the Jacob group also had moved from a nomadic shepherd life to a settled life. This analogous pre-history and their religion of the 'gods of the fathers' made it possible to connect these two groups of traditions. The Abraham-Isaac groups were associated with an immigration into Egypt[110] through the Moses group, who originally lived in the Negeb region in close proximity with them.[111] This tradition was used to enlarge the pre-history of the Israel-Jacob group, and thus Abraham and Isaac were made the grandfather and father of Israel-Jacob. Then the Israel-Jacob group were connected with the immigration into Egypt in order to associate them with the Moses group who had originally gone down to Egypt.[112]

As for the 'gods of the fathers', Seebass makes a slight modification. The 'gods of the fathers' who appear in the patriarchal narratives are

unnamed gods, and hence the 'god of Abraham' means not the god so named because his cult was founded by Abraham, but an unnamed clan-god of the group led by Abraham. Similarly אביר in אביר יעקב (49,24) is the epithet of the god worshipped by the Jacob group and not the name of that deity, and פחד in פחד יצחק is not the name of the deity worshipped by the Isaac group but an epithet. There is no independent expression the 'god of Jacob' except in Ex. 3,6.15 in the later coined genealogical formula. The 'god of Jacob' is also a secondary addition. According to Seebass, the designation פחד יצחק is a secondary contraction of פחד אביהו יצחק (31, 53b), and hence it is not a proper name of the deity worshipped by the Isaac group. Seebass suggests that the original designation of the tribal deity worshipped by the members of this group was אלהי אבי (Gen. 31,5; Ex. 15,2; 18,4). Hence אלהי אבי or אלהי אביך (Gen. 50,17) or אלהי אביך (49,25) or אלהי אביכם (39,29; 43,23) did not originally presuppose, as it now does, the genealogical scheme Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, but just the 'god of the father' of a particular group. For example, the 'god of my father' meant for the Jacob group, the 'god of Jacob' and similarly in the case of the other patriarchal groups. These cults of the 'gods of the fathers' were connected with the local Canaanite sanctuaries and yet the titles of the tribal gods remained in use, and the characteristics of these deities were transferred to the different Elim of the Canaanite sanctuaries.[113]

The introduction of the Yahweh religion into Canaan had a unique tradition history of its own. The Moses group together with the Abraham and the Isaac clans had associations with the Kenites in the Negeb before they moved to Egypt, and this, according to Seebass, is reflected in the tradition of the flight of Moses to the Midianites. Although Yahweh, the clan god of the Midianites, was already known to

the Moses group, they still worshipped the 'god of their father'.[114] The god Yahweh was appropriated by the Moses group in a decisive way and identified with their own Vatergott as a result of the prophetic insight of Miriam, who perceived Yahweh's presence in the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 15, 20f.).[115] Thus Sinai, which was hitherto the sanctuary of the Midianites, now became the cultic centre of the Moses group. Later, the Moses group brought the Yahweh cult with them into Canaan, when they immigrated there and associated it with the cult of the 'El god of Israel' at Shechem. Seebass notes certain common features amongst the two religions, which made it possible to unite them: the discarding of the images in the Shechem cult agreed with the proscription of images in Yahwism during the desert period, and also the tradition of covenant and law connected with אל ברית of Shechem was similar to the tradition of covenant and law connected with the Sinai tradition. Yahweh was the guiding god connected with the person of his mediator and his people and was not bound to a place,[116] he provided for his own and protected his worshippers against their enemies as the gods of the fathers had done. The union of Yahweh with the gods of the fathers was first brought about at Shechem and was later extended to the other Canaanite sanctuaries.[117]

Seebass's identification of a separate father 'Israel' presupposes attributing historical credibility to the patriarchal traditions. But what is given in the extant text is tradition history and not history. Seebass's approach is very different from that of Noth for whom the extant text does not necessarily represent the original traditions and their sequence. What the extant text presents is the end stage of a long process of tradition history during which period the traditions are re-arranged, regrouped and re-interpreted in terms of later contexts.

According to Noth, Jacob is the first patriarch and Abraham is the last, which is a complete reversal of the extant traditions in Genesis. So also, the establishment of a particular passage as primary in the extant text does not necessarily confirm its primary nature among the original traditions. Seebass, for example, rejects 32, 23ff., as secondary in favour of 35, 10f., but this does not confirm the primacy of the Bethel tradition over against the Penuel tradition. Seebass assigns the Bethel tradition (Gen. 35, 10f.) to the source E as against the usually accepted source P. He does not enter into the linguistic and theological problems connected with it.[118]

Seebass's attribution of the promise of land originally to the Jacob-Israel traditions and the promise of posterity to the Abraham and Isaac traditions seems to be arbitrary, because both of these promises are connected with each of the patriarchal traditions. The desire for posterity would belong to all groups,[119] and the desire to possess land could equally represent the aspirations of all nomadic groups who were moving towards a settled way of life.[120] Further, Seebass does not envisage any tensions involved in the incorporation of the 'gods of the fathers' into the Canaanite sanctuaries. Seebass points out that the El took over the characteristics of the 'gods of the fathers',[121] but he does not make any comment about the contribution of El-religion to the religion of the gods of the fathers. He gives importance to the connexion of the religion of the gods of the fathers with Yahwism but does not give any importance to El-religion in this process. The problems connected with settlement are very different from those of wandering in the desert; similarly, the conception of God held by nomads is very different from that of sedentary peoples, but Seebass does not indicate any changes brought about by the settlement to the nomadic idea of the god of the fathers.

The theme of 'Promise', however, plays an important role in the process of the fusion of the traditions of the different tribes. According to Seebass, the Israel and the Jacob traditions were joined together and focussed on a single father, as both traditions contained an identical land-promise. The Abraham and Isaac traditions, on the other hand, had similar promises of posterity. A fusion of the Jacob-Israel and the Abraham-Isaac traditions took place on the basis of promise. As a result of this, the promise of land in the Jacob-Israel traditions was extended to include the promise of posterity, and so also in the case of the Abraham-Isaac traditions the promise of posterity was enlarged to include the promise of land. Yahweh-religion was incorporated on a basis other than that of promise, namely the display of miraculous powers in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. However, Seebass finds an element of promise in the election theme in the Moses sagas and in the revelation of the name יהוה to Moses.[122]

(4) JAKOB HOFTIJZER examines the theme of 'Promise' to the patriarchs in the whole of the Old Testament in an altogether new way from that pursued by his predecessors. He attempts to combine in his work,[123] the literary critical approach of Staerk[124] and the traditio-historical method of Alt, Noth and von Rad, although Hoftijzer himself does not agree with any of them in respect of their conclusions. Hoftijzer emphasizes that any investigation of the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs' should begin with Staerk's method by enquiring into the extant text to identify the form of the tradition, and only then should one embark upon an investigation of the history of tradition.[125] Although Hoftijzer follows Staerk's method, he does not adhere to the source analysis of the documentary hypothesis and dismisses Staerk's conclusions as arbitrary. Hoftijzer has an entirely different scheme of the sources in Genesis from that of Wellhausen to which

Staerk confines himself so faithfully. On the basis of linguistic evidence,[126] Hoftijzer postulates two special groups of promise passages (i) The 'E-S group', which is so named on account of the special name, אל שדי, used for God in this group of passages (Gen. 17, 1ff.; 28,3f.; 35, 11ff; 48, 3f.). This group seems to be the same as the Priestly source in the Documentary hypothesis. (ii) The 'Gen. xv group', whose main features are similar to those of Gen. 15 (Gen. 12, 2f. 7; 13, 14ff.; 18, 18ff.; 22, 15ff.; 24,7; 26,3b-5. 24-25a; 28, 13f.; 32, 10-13). This group is almost identical with the combined sources of J and E.[127] A literary critical and traditio-historical analysis of the Genesis passages and other Pentateuchal materials leads him to the conclusion that the theme of 'Promise' is primary only in Genesis chs. 17 and 15 and that it has been secondarily added in all the other passages.

On the basis of Ex. 32, 7-14 and Lev. 26, Hoftijzer discusses the relation between Promise and Law. Israel's faithlessness to the law, on the one hand, exposed the promise to the danger of annulment, but the very promise, on the other hand, prevented the complete annihilation of Israel. It assured for Israel the chance of a return to obedience and thereby held open a renewed confirmation of the promise of the land. This is still clearly emphasized in Deuteronomy, and the same is confirmed by the extra-Pentateuchal material. But Hoftijzer finds that both in his 'El-Shaddai group' and in the 'Gen. xv group', the promises belonging to the patriarchal tradition and the Law belonging to the Exodus tradition are not originally connected. The Exodus tradition emphasized the relation between Yahweh and his people. The obligations mentioned in Ex. 32, 7-14 and Lev. 26 are not referred to in Gen. 15, where the emphasis is on the promises alone without any obligations. In Gen. 18 Abraham is depicted as a teacher of Law to his descendants, but the passage is not connected with any obligations for the fulfilment of

the promises. Hoftijzer concludes that the connexion between the promises to the patriarchs and the Law of the Exodus tradition took place at a much later time, when the possession of the land became problematic for Israel, perhaps during the latter part of the monarchical period or in the early Exilic period. When there were threats to the national existence of Israel or perhaps when the catastrophe of the Exile had already taken place, the promise was introduced for the first time to give Israel consolation through a very old promise of land, which offered the possibility of a return and realization of the land-promise.[128]

Hoftijzer then turns to the traditio-historical method and discusses the previous stages of the 'Promise' tradition. He rejects the conclusions of Noth and von Rad[129] that 'Promise' had already formed an important theme of the patriarchal traditions and that it subsequently provided a basis for joining the Exodus and the Settlement traditions together with originally non-Yahwistic patriarchal traditions. Hoftijzer observes that their conclusions are based upon Alt's thesis of the 'gods of the fathers' and proceeds to examine Alt with the express object of disproving Noth and von Rad by challenging the results of Alt.[130] Hoftijzer objects to Alt's differentiation between the 'god of the fathers' and Yahweh and argues that they are identical. (i) The formula אלהי אבי (אביך , אביו) is not peculiar to the patriarchal narratives. It is found in other parts of the Old Testament as well.[131] The promises made by the god of the fathers are fulfilled by Yahweh, and there is, therefore, no need to postulate a separate religion of the 'god of the fathers' prior to the Yahweh religion. For example, Jacob receives the promise of land at the point of leaving Canaan (Gen. 46,1) and it is the same God who brings back Jacob's descendants from Egypt to Canaan.[132] (ii) As for the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions which are cited by Alt as

evidence for the existence of a separate nomadic religion of the 'god of the fathers', Hoftijzer points out that the 'God of Arkesilaos' originates after the settlement of the nomadic tribes in the arable land. The inscriptions date from A.D. 20, whereas the Nabataeans entered into the arable land in the 4th Century B.C. The name itself is bound to a locality and does not represent a nomadic deity.[133] (iii) Hoftijzer argues that there is no support for postulating the existence of three separate 'gods of the fathers'. Gen. 31, 53 which Alt employs to suggest the existence of different 'gods of the fathers' is not a valid interpretation, because it is Laban who swears by the 'god of his family' and names the deity after two members of his family, Abraham and Nahor, who are brothers and sons of Terah. Jacob is added later and as such it is Laban and not Jacob who is the worshipper of the 'god of Abraham'.

אלהי אברהם in this context cannot be interpreted as Yahweh. Moreover, the cult is not founded by Abraham. The designation פחד יצחק does not indicate a separate deity but is identical with Yahweh. The expression אביר יעקב is not found in the patriarchal traditions, and מגן אברהם has no support in the patriarchal narratives. Hence Hoftijzer concludes that the gods of the fathers should not be considered as representatives and remnants of the pre-Yahwistic cult of the patriarchs.[134]

Hoftijzer also rejects the idea set forth by Noth and von Rad of a first fulfilment of the land-promise to the patriarchs and a later extension of the same to include the period of the Settlement. Hoftijzer maintains that the patriarchal traditions and those of Moses and Joshua were already connected prior to the introduction of the 'Promise' element. Promise was added only at a later time, when the possession of the land had become doubtful for Israel, during the later monarchical period or when it had already been lost, during the Exilic period.[135]

It is not very clear whether Hoftijzer proposes that the promise in Gen. 15 and 17 had originally belonged to the pre-settlement period or whether in them also it has been added secondarily. He seems to imply that even in these chapters it was first introduced in the Exilic period. If this is so, his conclusion is not very different from that of Gunkel, who held that Gen. 15 came from a period when the possession of the land had become problematic for Israel.[136] In so far as Gen. 17 is usually allocated to P, its lateness is already accepted. Hoftijzer's view that the patriarchal narratives had already been connected in historical sequence from Abraham to Jacob is similar to Gunkel's view that the patriarchal narratives were purely literary, artistic narratives devoid of any theological ideas into them.[137] Von Rad, on the other hand, emphasizes that 'Promise' was already there in the tradition and that the Yahwist took it over and extended it in order to introduce other traditions into the Hexateuchal framework of the ancient creed. Von Rad dates the enlargement of the theme of 'Promise' by the Yahwist in the Solomonic era, whereas Hoftijzer proposes a much later date. Hoftijzer, perhaps, agrees with von Rad that 'Promise' is not an integral part of the patriarchal narratives, but he differs from von Rad in the assertion that 'Promise' is not an integral part of the Heilsgeschichte. Hoftijzer differs from Noth in respect of both of these ideas. For Noth, the theme of 'Promise' is the kernel of the patriarchal traditions, and it was regarded as having been fulfilled by the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan. 'Promise' had already formed one of the main Pentateuchal themes of the early Israelite twelve-tribe amphictyony in Shechem.

Hoftijzer's conclusions, based upon the literary-critical approach of Staerk, make it difficult for him to appreciate the traditio-historical method of Alt, Noth and von Rad. He does not concede any pre-history

to the traditions apart from that which is apparent in the extant text. In this respect Hoftijzer may be called a literary-critical positivist, for although he attempts to enquire into the pre-history of the tradition, he does not succeed, because he is bound by his literary-critical conclusions.[138] His attempt to combine Traditionsgeschichte and Literaturgeschichte is not very successful as they begin from entirely different presuppositions. Literaturgeschichte takes the extant text in all its details as the basis of interpretation, whereas Traditionsgeschichte goes behind the present text to unravel the previous stages of the tradition in its interpretation. Although Hoftijzer claims that he is pursuing the traditio-historical method in the latter part of his book, he deals with it in a rather superficial manner. He does not give attention to the traditio-historical origins and the traditio-historical kernel of the patriarchal traditions.[139]

Hoftijzer does not sufficiently appreciate the difference between the approaches of Alt, Noth and von Rad. He joins together Noth and von Rad as though they both represent the same interpretation of the patriarchal narratives. Moreover, he assesses the credibility of Noth and von Rad on the basis of his rather negative criticism of Alt. Noth and von Rad do follow Alt in certain respects, especially with regard to the pre-Israelite patriarchal religion of the 'god of the fathers', but their individual approaches are sharply distinguished from each other and deal with more extensive problems connected with the patriarchal narratives than the ones dealt with by Alt. Hoftijzer does not see these differences and thus presents a very superficial criticism of Noth and von Rad. Weidmann, commenting on Hoftijzer's attacks on Alt says that in spite of all that Hoftijzer has said in criticism of Alt, Alt's essay 'The God of Fathers' still remains the most plausible work for solving the problem of patriarchal religion.[140]

(b) Development of the theme of 'Promise' from the point of view of literary formation.

(1) GERHARD von RAD follows the literary critical tradition of the Graf-Wellhausen school, the form-critical method of Hermann Gunkel and the traditio-historical approach of Alt[141] to study the process through which the present patriarchal narratives have developed in relation to the rest of the Hexateuch. Von Rad agrees with Alt that the theme of 'Promise' formed an essential element of the religion of the 'God of the fathers', but while Alt attributed the promise of posterity to the pre-Palestinian period and the promise of the land to the settlement period, von Rad considers both of the promises to belong to the pre-Canaanite period, when the ancestors of Israel were living a semi-nomadic way of life on the edges of the arable land of Canaan. Of the two, von Rad considers the land-promise to be of greater importance than the promise of becoming a nation.[142] Like Alt and Noth, von Rad also sees the origin of the patriarchal traditions in the cult, but says that the Yahwist collected these traditions at a time when they were severing their connection with the cult, arranged them according to the Hexateuchal pattern of the old creed (Deut. 26, 5-8) and connected them with the other Hexateuchal themes. The traditions were being freed from their cultic associations as a result of a religious and intellectual crisis which developed in Israel with the formation of the Israelite state under David and Solomon.[143] While doing this, the Yahwist strained the little creed almost to bursting point. His particular contribution can be seen at three specific points in the Hexateuch : (i) the connexion of the Sinai tradition with the Settlement tradition, traditions which were originally located separately at Shechem and Gilgal respectively[144]; (ii) the extension of the patriarchal tradition, and (iii) the prefacing to the patriarchal narratives of the Primeval History.

The patriarchal tradition, mentioned in the creed in a laconic manner, 'A wandering Aramaean was my father', is enlarged with special emphasis on the theme of 'Promise to the patriarchs'. Von Rad says that the diverse traditions of the patriarchs were supported and connected by a scaffolding, the so-called promise to the patriarchs. The promise-theme itself is not an innovation by the Yahwist, it was already there in the traditions which the Yahwist had received. But the Yahwist introduced this theme in several places in the patriarchal narratives, where it was not found originally, and this addition altered and enriched the original traditions. Von Rad refers to the promise motif in the Joseph story (Gen. 46, 3; 50,24) and to the promise of land in the Jacob story (Gen. 28, 10ff.) as examples of the narratives to which 'Promise' has been secondarily added in order to weld together different traditions.[145] The promise of the possession of the land of Canaan by the patriarchs originally implied an immediate and direct fulfilment in the possession of Canaan by the patriarchs, but this was extended by the Yahwist to include a departure to Egypt and a final fulfilment under Joshua. The original patriarchal tradition did not envisage this break and postponement of the fulfilment of the land-promise. Thus, the promise of the land was connected with the Settlement tradition, before it was connected with the Sinai tradition. This is clearly indicated in the creed, where the patriarchal and the Settlement traditions are found but where there is no reference to the Sinai tradition at all. This, according to von Rad, is because they originally belonged to different cult centres, the Sinai tradition to Shechem and the patriarchal-Settlement tradition to Gilgal.[146] P also indicates this extension by designating the relation of the land to the patriarchs as אֶרֶץ מְגוּרִים . Thus, although von Rad considers the land-promise to be the primary promise in the original

patriarchal narratives, its present enlarged application to the whole of the Hexateuchal history is the work of the Yahwist. The patriarchal period now becomes a period of promise, pointing to a future fulfilment in the occupation of the land. The Yahwist makes even the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15) point to a future fulfilment at Sinai.[147] P gives yet another promise, namely that El-Shaddai will be the god of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17, 7), which, von Rad says, is an antedating of the substance of the Covenant at Sinai.[148] Thus the patriarchal period which was originally independent, now becomes in every respect a temporary stage, pointing forward to a future fulfilment.

Von Rad differentiates between two types of passages in the patriarchal narratives, those which belong to the original traditions and those which have been composed afresh by the Yahwist to connect the different tradition complexes. Von Rad calls the latter, 'link passages' or 'transitional passages', and says that these contain the theological presuppositions of the author (Gen. 12, 1-9; 18, 17-33)[149]. The passage dealing with the call of Abraham presents the way in which the Yahwist conceived of the election of Israel by Yahweh, as being the means of effecting blessing upon the nations. In this connection von Rad draws attention to the significance of the context in the interpretation of scripture. The theological presuppositions of the author are found not only in his presentation of the old traditions and in the link passages, but also in the very arrangement of these traditions in the present text. Thus, the place in which the patriarchal traditions are introduced, as an introduction to the Settlement tradition and prefaced by the Primeval history, gives a new theological significance to the patriarchal traditions, one which they did not have in their original form. The original narrow, limited promise to the patriarchs, is enlarged to include the all-Israelite context of the Settlement tradition, while the Primeval

history places the promise to the patriarchs within the universal context of God's plan for the salvation of all mankind.

Von Rad believes the entire work of the Yahwist to have developed out of the peculiar historical situation in which he was placed. With the formation of the state under David and Solomon the old cultic traditions were loosened from their cultic and local associations, and this posed the problem of their validity to the Yahwist's contemporaries. The secular influences of the enlightened Davidic and Solomonic era, made these ancient cultic traditions irrelevant. Their narrow tribal associations were no longer meaningful for the 'pan-Israelite' idea arising out of the political success of David. The question that faced the Yahwist and his contemporaries was how far these old cultic traditions were valid in the changed secular age, an age which saw the success of Israel in the political success of David. The Yahwist does not disregard the old cultic view of God operating in the sacred events, but he points to a new secular way in which God acts in history. Von Rad points out that the Yahwist was influenced by the author of the 'Succession Narrative', who saw the hidden work of God in the political exploits of David. The Yahwist gives a similar answer to his contemporaries, namely that God is still working out his salvation, although it now seems to be hidden in the course of the political and social events of history. Thus, in the east-Jordan Jacob stories, in the story of the wooing of Rebekah and in the Joseph story,[150] there is displayed this aspect of the secular and hidden guidance of historical events by Yahweh. There are no references to the cult, and the activity of God is seen in the course of the event and not apart from it in a cultic context. The promise itself is regarded as having been fulfilled through the mysterious, hidden guidance of God.

Although von Rad deals with the tradition history of the patriarchal narratives, he does not construct a detailed tradition history of the individual patriarchal figures and the process through which their traditions were formed, as Noth does in his Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch. But von Rad gives his approval to Noth's delineation of the tradition history of the patriarchal figures as an approximate reconstruction, when he refers to Noth's work in his Old Testament Theology.[151] Von Rad's postulation of the little creed as the pattern on the basis of which the Yahwist had constructed the Hexateuch, seems to be arbitrary, since the creed itself contains no indication of the theme of 'Promise' at all. Recently Carmichael has argued that the creed is simply a historicization of the feast of the first fruits by the Deuteronomist, that it is based upon the Kadesh traditions (Num. 14f.) and that it is, therefore, a later formation.[152] Childs also casts doubts upon von Rad's hypothesis that the little creed is inherited and reworked by the Deuteronomist. On the basis of his investigation of the Exodus tradition in Deuteronomy, Childs concludes that it is more likely that this creed is the Deuteronomic summary of the already existing traditions.[153] Rost also argues for a late date for the Credo on the basis of history of language and the presence of the late motifs in the creed.[154] Further, von Rad does not discuss in detail the origin of the promise motif in the different patriarchal traditions. He merely states that it was already present in the traditions received by the Yahwist. He does not go into the tradition history of the different promises. Von Rad was more interested in their literary formation and in the wider implications of the theme of 'Promise' in relation to other Hexateuchal themes and thus does not deal with the previous stages of the theme of 'Promise'.

The later extension of the original traditions by the Yahwist, proposed by von Rad, brings to the forefront the problem of the relationship between tradition and theology. But the dichotomy between tradition and theology which is present in Gunkel's approach is overcome to some extent by von Rad's emphasis on the hermeneutical dimension of the formation and transmission of the patriarchal traditions. These traditions were not handed down merely for the sake of antiquarian interest, but were reinterpreted and reorientated in relation to the changing times, so that within the compass of a few verses, the entire history of tradition from its origin to the time of its writing is implied. Israel incorporated their experience with God into these traditions. Gen. 22, for example, is set out as a story of the test of Abraham's faith. Von Rad says that this was a later addition to an ancient cult tradition which told of the substitution of child sacrifice by animal sacrifice, but it is now made to express the moments of perplexity which Israel had experienced in her relationship with God, when God had appeared to be undoing his own work.[155] The delay of the fulfilment of promise and the impression of an apparent contradiction in Yahweh's attitude are explained as a test which Yahweh sets for his chosen one and his chosen people. The problems connected with promise are faced in all earnestness, and solutions are offered in terms of faith in God. Thus, the original motifs are altered, transformed and sometimes omitted, in order to accommodate new problems which Israel faced in her history and in her relations with God. Now theological ideas are not arbitrary insertions by the collectors but the result of a growing experience of the people of God. Von Rad's view is an advance over Noth's unitary view that both theology and also the idea of promise were already part of the tradition from the very beginning. Noth does speak of the growth and development

from the kernel of the tradition, but he does not elaborate this idea in terms of theological development.[156] Von Rad focusses attention on the community or the individual persons who held these traditions and transmitted them, and points to the tensions, the hopes and the fears of which they were aware in their experience with God and his promises. Here 'Promise' is seen in terms of the experience of Israel at different points in her history.

The new theology and the secular humanism, which von Rad finds in the Yahwist as an expression of the Davidic-Solomonic era, raise the question of how far such a theology is an essential part of the old traditions or how far von Rad is reading modern theological ideas into them. Von Rad's view is difficult to maintain, in so far as the Yahwist has also the boldest anthropomorphic conception of God in the primeval history and in the patriarchal stories. For example, there are strong anthropomorphic ideas of God especially in the Abraham stories (Gen. 15; 18f.).[157] Von Rad himself recognizes this difficulty, but says that it is the 'mark of a lofty and mature way of thinking'. And yet, perhaps not satisfied with this explanation, he goes on to add, 'this glass-like, transparent, and fragile way of thinking in the Yahwistic narrative makes every exposition, which inevitably coarsens the text, a difficult and almost insoluable task'.[158] This would perhaps necessitate some other explanation, which could account satisfactorily for the presence not only of anthropomorphic ideas about God but also of the so-called secular theology in the Yahwist.[159]

(2) LEONHARD ROST focusses attention on the literary formation of the three Pentateuchal sources and studies their distinctive contribution to patriarchal religion in relation to the periods in which these sources had originated.[160] The Yahwist, the Elohist and the author

of the priestly writing have attempted, through a narrative of the pre-history of their nation, not only to describe the way of god with his people in the past, but also to answer burning contemporary questions. These source documents were written to provide both admonition and encouragement for the people of their own times.

The Yahwist, who belongs to the period of transition between the reigns of David and Solomon, attempted to impress upon the heterogenous tribal elements and affiliated states in the expanding Davidic empire consciousness of a common God and a feeling of solidarity. He points out how these different peoples were already genealogically connected with the forefathers of Israel in the primeval and patriarchal periods and thus stood under the call and guidance of Yahweh, the God of Israel. Both the Canaanites and the Philistines were already related to Israel through their ancestors, the sons of Noah - Shem, Ham and Japeth.[161]

Rost observes that although there is an overall tendency in the Yahwist to suggest that Yahweh was worshipped right from the primeval period, yet a subtle distinction is made in the patriarchal narratives with respect to the use of the divine name Yahweh. The Yahwist speaks of the direct revelation of Yahweh to Abraham, whereas, in the case of subsidiary figures like Hagar (Gen. 16) and Lot (Gen. 19), the Yahwist speaks only of the appearance of the מלאך יהוה . Rost, however, points out that this distinction does not have much importance as the מלאך יהוה acts on behalf of Yahweh himself. Rost makes a further distinction in 16, 3, where the name of the deity אל ראי connected with a place is retained, although this narrative was perhaps originally an aetiological saga connected with a local numen. But even here there is a fine distinction made, in that the Yahwist himself does not mention the name of the local deity but lets Hagar declare it. Rost says that this careful differentiation points to the fact that

this deity was worshipped by the Ishmaelites and the Hagarites in the south and that the Yahwist introduces a gentle rebuke to the Ishmaelites, to the effect that they, as descendants of Abraham, should have known Yahweh. The Yahwist perhaps wants to point out further that by refusing Yahweh and choosing to worship אל ראי , the Ishmaelites stood outside the great community of Yahweh, namely, the Davidic kingdom. In view of these observations, Rost concludes that the patriarchal worship of the El-deity is not attested in the Yahwistic sources. As for Gen. 21,33(JE), where Abraham is reported to have planted a tamarisk and called upon the deity אל עולם , Rost says that this passage originally belonged to the Elohist and that it has been secondarily added to the Yahwistic account. The formula קרא ב" is indeed a good Yahwistic phrase, but the divine name אל עולם set in apposition, is not common in J.[162]

The Elohist belongs to the northern kingdom, and in the south, only Beersheba has any significance for him. He has no interest in the different nations of Palestine, so that he omits all Yahwistic narratives which indicate a genealogical relationship between the Israelites and the neighbouring peoples. The Elohist emphasizes the Aramaean origin of the Israelites, which is also preserved in the Deuteronomic creed (Deut. 26,5). In contrast to the Yahwist, the Elohist wants to show that only the descendants of Israel-Jacob have a right to the worship of Yahweh. In order to do this, he attributes the worship of the 'gods of the fathers' to the patriarchs, who were also the ancestors of their neighbours, but he associates the worship of Yahweh with the Israelites who were led by Moses. This narrow outlook of the Elohist, according to Rost, is due to the fact that the northern kingdom had a limited political sphere and had thus abandoned all hopes of a vast empire. As a result, the Elohist emphasizes the historically separate existence of Israel.

For the Elohist, only the twelve-tribe nation Israel worshipped Yahweh. The name Yahweh was revealed for the first time to Moses, and before that God was known as the 'god of the fathers'. Rost says that even if all other passages are considered to be secondary, still Gen. 31, 53 would prove, beyond all doubt, the existence of the worship of the 'god of the fathers'. This deity was generally known by the common name for God, אלהים , for two reasons : (i) because God revealed himself to the son as the god of his father, and (ii) because a sense of awe prevented them from mentioning the proper name of God, just as, for example, Eliezer speaks of the god of his master Abraham and does not address God by his proper name. The patriarchal narratives show that these gods of the fathers were associated with the local El-deity. This is particularly found in the Jacob and the Isaac stories. Rost thinks that the Jacob-Isaac traditions were transferred to Abraham when the latter was made the ancestor of Israel, and thereby a connexion was brought about between the north and the south. The genealogical connexion was already present in the work of the Yahwist, which preceded that of the Elohist. Further, Rost observes that the El-deity belongs to Canaan and is older than the 'gods of the fathers' who were later located at the Canaanite El-sanctuaries. On the basis of Jos. 24, Rost postulates two immigrations into Canaan. After the first immigration and settlement in Canaan, certain sections amongst the immigrants made friendly relations with the Canaanites and adopted El-worship at Shechem, Bethel and Beersheba. But there were others who adhered to their old worship of the 'gods of the fathers' belonging to their desert religion. The second immigration was that of the Joseph group, who brought with them the Yahweh religion.[163] Yahwism was later overlaid upon the El-religion and the religion of the 'gods of the fathers'. The Elohist shows, in this way, knowledge of a time when Yahweh was not worshipped in Canaan. These Elohistic

traditions were later joined with the Yahwistic traditions during the period between the destruction of the northern kingdom and the Exile of the southern kingdom, so that the differences between them have been completely eliminated in the extant text.[164]

The Priestly writing, which, according to Rost, is 'an epitome of the Yahwist', knows J's primeval history and E's thesis that Yahweh had revealed his special name to Moses. P has his own framework which he fills in with genealogies taken from the Sethite and Kenite clan-trees of the Yahwist.[165] In the revelation to Moses, P reports that God had told Moses that he was known to the patriarchs as אל שדי . In conformity with this, P employs אל שדי in Gen. 17, 1 and 35, 11. He also uses the name אל שדי in the blessing passages in 28, 3 and 43, 14. Although P chooses the name of the deity אל שדי in preference to the designation, the 'god of the fathers', he does not locate אל שדי in a Canaanite sanctuary. The name אל שדי is already used by the Yahwist in Jacob's blessing of Joseph (49, 25)[166] and in the Balaam blessing (Num. 24, 4. 16). Rost points out that P employs a divine name compounded with אל and not the designation 'god of the fathers' because the idea of associating man with God in the divine designation perhaps seemed offensive to P's idea of the transcendence of Yahweh (כבוד יהוה) while to limit the deity to a locality in the way that the El-deity was, was equally offensive to him, so that he omits the name of the place associated with אל שדי . Rost suggests that P arrived at this name from the thesis of Jos. 24 that the fathers had served other gods on the other side of the river, or perhaps the Akkadian name Ilu Sadu may have influenced him in choosing this name, or the שדי in the Yahwistic account may have led him to this name. All this shows, however, that he could not fall back upon a historical memory of a peculiar name for the 'god of the fathers'.[167] Rost thinks that similar to the אל deities in the E, P and even J sources, the

אל עליון in Gen. 14, 19. 20. 22 could point to an early historical memory amongst the Israelites.[168]

After a detailed examination of the worship of God in the different sources, Rost comes to the conclusion that none of the sources presents a picture which is historically credible. Each of them attempts to give an ideal picture in terms of its own historical cicumstances, so that there appear different pictures of pre-Israelite worship in the patriarchal narratives. The Yahwist connects אל only with secondary figures in his narrative. The Elohist reflects the knowledge of the existence of the religion of the 'god of the fathers' and El-religion, but he makes a subtle distinction in that he uses the common appellative אלהים for God, and even where he uses אל, it is not in his narrative section but in speeches. The Priestly writing uses the name אל שדי and, like J, disguises the traces of the religion of the 'god of the fathers'. It is only the Elohist who gives a true picture of the existence of the religion of the 'god of the fathers', and yet he also attempts to associate it with the common name for God אלהים.[169]

Rost's investigation further confirms the results of Alt's work about patriarchal religion. The subtle differentiations which the sources endeavour to make and, at the same time, their attempt to preserve the ancient traditions could perhaps be seen as a result of the cultural conflicts brought about by the Settlement and by the later establishment of the Davidic kingdom. Rost's suggestion that P took care to avoid in his designation both the transcendental god becoming associated with men (as in nomadic religion) and the Ortsgebundenheit of the deity (reflected in Canaanite religion) because both of these were offensive to him,[170] is of great importance for understanding the theological

tensions which the writers had to confront in working with the traditions handed over to them. Perhaps it could be asked in a positive manner how far the authors attempted to preserve the best in both cultural traditions and thus enrich their theology. Here, syncretism could be seen in a positive manner rather than in a negative sense of the avoidance of certain ideas. It is interesting to observe that none of the sources dispenses with the אל association in their accounts, and that each author has, on the other hand, adapted and reinterpreted the אל religion according to his own theology and in terms of his own historical circumstances. They must have found positive values in the El-religion in spite of its apparent limitations.

Rost's observation that P uses the name of the deity אל שדי in blessing passages in the patriarchal narratives is significant. Here, perhaps, is an indication of the origin of the idea of blessing within the Canaanite El-religion.[171] Alt makes a similar comment about the theme of 'Promise', namely that it is regularly connected with the 'gods of the fathers' and not with the local Elim.[172] Rost does not discuss the theme of 'Promise' in his essay, but his delineation of the idea of God and the worship of God in the patriarchal narratives has a direct bearing upon the theology of 'Promise'. The characteristics of God determine the theology of 'Promise'. If 'blessing' is connected with Canaanite El-religion, and 'Promise' with the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' of the nomadic period, the association of these two as one and the same idea in the patriarchal narratives could perhaps provide a clue to the understanding of the theology of the patriarchal narratives. The theology of the patriarchal narratives could perhaps be regarded as developing within the context of the meeting of the nomadic and the sedentary cultures through which the Israelite tribes had passed.

(c) Development of the theme of 'Promise' from the point of view of the religion of the pre-Israelite tribes.

(1) OTTO. EISSFELDT finds Gunkel's demand for form-critical method justified to a large extent, on account of the uncertainties connected with the literary-critical method,[173] but he himself prefers to follow the latter approach as a safeguard against subjectivism and as a sure basis for an objective study of the Old Testament.[174] Eissfeldt has written on several themes connected with the patriarchal narratives in which he emphasizes the Canaanite-El-religion as the religion of the pre-Israelite tribes and attributes the patriarchal promises to the Canaanite El-deities. He also traces the attitude of the authors of the sources towards Canaan, its culture and religion, and this has important consequences for the study of the theology of the patriarchal narratives.

(i) The patriarchal religion as Canaanite El-Religion.

Eissfeldt observes a special group of legends connected with cultic places. These are the ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the Canaanite sanctuaries, which explain the origin of the sacredness of a place together with the customs practised there. Revelations of the Canaanite deity אל connected with these sanctuaries were associated with the ancestors of the pre-Israelite tribes, who are now considered to be the founders of these cults. Thus, Abraham is said to have invoked אל עולם at Beersheba (21, 33 יהוה is perhaps a secondary addition, according to Eissfeldt) and also had a special relationship with the אל of Hebron. Isaac had close connections with the אל of Beersheba and with אל ראי of Negeb (26, 23; 46, 1; 24, 62). Similarly, Jacob was associated with

אל בית אל (28, 10-22; 31, 13), fought with an אל at a place which he called פנואל (32, 25-33) and set up an altar at Shechem and named it אל אלהי ישראל (33, 20). According to Eissfeldt, the names פחד יצחק and אביר יעקב are not to be associated with the nomadic and semi-nomadic family cults of which Isaac and Jacob were founders, but represent the El of Canaan, whom these tribes worshipped in Canaan.[175] The gods of the pre-Canaanite religion of the fathers were none other than the idols which the Israelite Yahwists are required by Joshua to put away (Jos. 24) and the gods buried by Jacob at Shechem prior to his pilgrimage to Bethel to worship אל בית אל (35, 1-4).[176] The pre-Canaanite religion of the fathers did not have much significance in the religion of Yahweh. Eissfeldt observes traces of the deity אל in the book of Genesis, in passages where they are now connected with Yahweh. For example, in Gen. 28, 10-22 Jacob says, 'Surely Yahweh is in this place and I did not know it' (v. 16) while verse 19 reports that he called the name of the place בית אל . Here verse 19 presupposes an אל as the god who dwelt in Bethel, and Yahweh seems to have been inserted later into the text. Similarly in the story of Hagar (Gen. 16, 4-14), the narrator reports, 'And she called Yahweh, who had spoken to her : "Thou art אל ראי "' (v. 13).[177] Both L (Lay source)[178] and J, for whom Yahweh is already the God of Abraham, the God who was known from primeval times, represent the revelation made to Abraham in Canaan, as having been made not by Yahweh but by an אל , and the same is the case with respect to Isaac (26, 33L) and Jacob (28, 19; 32, 24b-33; 33, 18-19 L; 20, 20J). There is a great emphasis in the patriarchal narratives about not taking Canaanite wives. A similar attitude could be expected with regard to Canaanite El-religion. But, on the contrary, there is a positive attitude towards El-religion. אל שדי is the designation

of a manifestation of El, perhaps located at Hebron, but P represents this deity as the god of the patriarchs. There is no evidence at all in the patriarchal stories of a conflict with the El-religion such as is found in the post-Settlement accounts with respect to the Baal religion. Thus, the patriarchs had already participated in the El-cult before Yahwism was connected with it, at different sanctuaries in Canaan - Bethel, Shechem, Hebron (Mamre), Beersheba and Jerusalem.[179] Eissfeldt observes that Shechem was the centre at which two types of religion were united with each other at different periods in history. At first the El-cult at Shechem was appropriated by the historical entity of the Jacob-Israel tribes, who erected an altar, named it אל אלהי ישראל and swore allegiance to this deity (33, 18-20). Later, a century or two afterwards, the twelve tribes of Israel swore allegiance to Yahweh, who had brought an Israelite group, probably the 'House of Joseph', from Egypt to central Palestine, by way of Kadesh, Sinai and east-Jordan.[180]

Eissfeldt emphasizes that Canaan was the sphere of El, that at first his supremacy was acknowledged over that of Yahweh and that only gradually was El supplanted by Yahweh who in turn, assumed the role of El as creator of the world and highest God. Eissfeldt points out that Yahweh was originally a bizarre and dangerous character, who had been for the first time essentially perfected and tempered by the qualities of El, qualities such as compassion, grace, patience and wisdom.[181] Eissfeldt even goes so far as to say that the God of the Old Testament, as he has been received by Christianity, exhibits in reality the characteristics of El to a greater extent than those of Yahweh.[182] At first El is equated with Yahweh (Jos. 12, 22; Ps. 104; Job. 1,1-2,13; 42, 7-17). In Is. 40, 18; 43.12; 45, 22 there is an apologetical intention to represent Yahweh as El or to claim the name El for Yahweh. There are a few passages in which El is represented as superior to Yahweh. In Gen. 14, 18-24, for example,

Abraham venerates this El (Elyon). In Deut. 32, 8-9 Yahweh is allotted Israel by El, who is represented as the king of the gods. This monarchic status of El is also indicated by Ps. 82, 2 'Yahweh is in the council of El'.[183] Thus Eissfeldt finds a positive attitude towards El among both patriarchs and later Yahweh worshippers. There is an aversion towards the 'gods of the fathers' which is represented in the burial and the putting away of the strange gods in the two cultic ceremonies connected with Shechem (Gen. 35, 1-4 and Jos. 24, 2. 14-15). In 'Jahwe der Gott der Väter', Eissfeldt maintains that the 'God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' did not represent the gods of the pre-Mosaic Hebrews merged into one deity, but the El-deity who revealed himself to the patriarchs and gave them promises.[184] In his earlier, 'El and Yahweh', however, he had accepted that 'the Fear of Isaac' or 'the kinsman of Isaac' was a 'god of the fathers'.[185] Thus the pre-Yahwistic cults did include the worship of the 'gods of the fathers', but it was El-worship that finally became authoritative and pushed the other cults into the background. The genealogical link Abraham-Isaac-Jacob is also the consequence of the El-religion into which the different 'gods of the fathers' were incorporated.

(ii) <u>The Canaanite El deity as the giver of the patriarchal promises</u>.

Eissfeldt develops further the idea that El is the giver of promises to the patriarchs in his article, 'Der kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Erzvätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitz - Verheissungen',[186] He points out that when the authors of the Genesis narratives use the names אל or יהוה אלהים or מלאך יהוה or מלאך אלהים , they always intend only the true God, who is their own God and that in some cases there is the possibility that an original אל

must have made place for a יהוה or a מלאך יהוה or a מלאך אלהים . It is remarkable that אל has survived in the patriarchal narratives in spite of such alterations. Thus, Eissfeldt thinks that even the command to Abraham in Gen. 12, 1-3, which now appears as Yahweh's, must have originally come from an El-deity. Eissfeldt accepts the fact that it is not given in the territory of El, namely Canaan, but points out that there are instances in the patriarchal stories when an אל protects and blesses his worshippers staying outside Canaan. In 31, 13 אל בית אל helps Jacob in Mesopotamia, and in 46,3 אל , the god of his father, promises help to Jacob on his journey to Egypt. Thus, as a Canaanite deity, El enters into relationship with Abraham and commands him to leave his home and to journey to Canaan. In 24,7 Abraham confirms this by identifying Yahweh, the god of heaven, as the one who led him from his native land and granted him promises of land and posterity.[187] Shechem, Bethel and Beersheba are connected with אל deities. In 12,7 Yahweh promises land to Abraham in Shechem, and later Shechem is connected with an אל (35, 1-4. 6b-7). The promise given in outline to Abraham in Shechem (12,7) is repeated in detail at Bethel, where Yahweh summons Abraham to go through the entire land as a symbol of possession (13,14-17). But here, too, there is an אל deity in Bethel. Beersheba is associated with אל עולם (21,33), and this is a place which is connected with all three patriarchs (Abraham 21,33 which Eissfeldt thinks is originally the concluding verse of 15,1-21; Isaac 26, 2-5 and Jacob 46, 1-3), and there, it is reported, they all received promises from an אל deity. Jerusalem is connected with אל עליון , but no patriarchal promises are reported in this story (Gen. 14, 18-24).[188]

The Priestly source tells of the promise of אל שדי to Abraham in 17, 1-22. No place is mentioned in this account, but Eissfeldt, in

agreement with most scholars, connects אל שדי with Hebron. In Gen. 22, 15-18 it is reported that Abraham named the place יהוה יראה 'Yahweh is seen'. The root ראה in 22, 8 alludes to the name of the divine Lord of the place, אל ראי . This name also appears in 22, 14 and 16, 4-16. Eissfeldt suggests that the place was a spring in the desert south of Beersheba, which was about two days journey from there (22, 4.19). Moreover, 24, 62 and 25, 11 connect Isaac with a place named after אל ראי (באר לחי ראי). The blessing of Jacob by Isaac is connected with אל שדי in P (28, 3-4). According to J, Jacob changes the name of the place Luz into Bethel after receiving a revelation and promises from Yahweh. But Jacob expresses astonishment that Yahweh was in that place and builds an altar for him and names the place אל בית אל , a factor which suggests that the narrative was originally connected with an אל and not with יהוה . P also points to the connexion of אל with בית אל in 35, 9-13. 15. In the east-Jordan area, אלהים reveals himself to Jacob (31, 12b-13) and also warns Laban (31,29). In 31, 42. 53 אלהים is equated with the 'god of the fathers', but the whole story has in view Gen. 28, 10-22 which is already connected with the אל deity of Bethel. In 32, 22-32 Jacob is given a new name 'Israel' at Penuel, a name which indirectly promises posterity and land-possession. This also is connected with an אל . Thus, Eissfeldt finds all the references to 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives connected directly or indirectly with an אל deity.[189]

Eissfeldt finds further evidence for the connection of the אל deity with Canaan in the Ras Shamra texts. Although Ras Shamra-Ugarit flourished in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C., it perhaps had a longer period of history and may well attest the worship of the El-deity in Canaan in the middle of the 2nd millenium B.C. El is the supreme god of Canaan and has no connexion with a definite nation or group. It was this feature which made it possible for the nomadic or semi-nomadic

Hebrew group, temporarily living in Canaan, to worship this El-deity as represented at different cult centres. They found in these places understanding for their hopes to a future possession of their present land of sojourn. From the moment that Abraham entered into Canaan, it became his native land and also that of his descendants. In 31,13 the אל בית אל directs Jacob to return to his native land. Eissfeldt traces further examples of an original אל deity connected with promise passages in the book of Exodus as well.[190]

(iii) The attitude of the authors of the sources to Canaan, its culture and religion.

Eissfeldt traces four sources in Genesis which are representations of cultural history and not mere collections of sagas.[191] In addition to the usual Wellhausenian J, E and P, he identifies a new source, which he calls L, denoting a 'Lay source'.

The Lay source is the most primitive of the sources, far removed from the cultic and priestly interests of the priesthood. L is committed to the nomadic ideal and expresses an attitude of reserve and even of rejection towards the land of Canaan, its agricultural way of life and its cultus. Eissfeldt suggests that this source probably belongs to the movement which led to the revolution under Jehu, supported by prophets like Elijah and Elisha and by the Rechabites, who had, on the whole, a negative attitude towards agriculture and strove to bring back the nomadic culture (2 K. 10, 15-16). Elijah goes on a pilgrimage to Horeb (1K. 19), and, in the same way, L regards Sinai as the dwelling place of Yahweh and as the real home of Israel. In view of its affinities with the prophetic groups, Eissfeldt assigns L to the 8th century B.C., and says that it could have originated even a century earlier as a reaction

against Solomon's policy, which was favourable to Canaanite civilisation.[192]

The Yahwist, on the other hand, shows a great enthusiasm for the agricultural life, for the national-political life and for the cultus. Eissfeldt says that the Yahwist expresses a proud delight in the kingdom and the king in his account of the blessing of Balaam. The first blessing (Num. 24, 3-9) speaks of the glory and fruitfulness of Canaan and of the supremacy of Israel. It celebrates Saul's victory over Agag. The second blessing (Num. 25, 15-19) praises the Israelite king and refers to Israel's most powerful king, David. For J, the departure from Sinai to the land of Canaan is a great advance undertaken in great joy and expectation. Eissfeldt dates J in the 9th or 10th Century and comments that it would have come from those circles against whom the opposition of L was directed.[193]

The Elohist is much more emphatic about the particularity of Israel. His attitude to Canaan is similar to that of L. For example, he does not say anything about the agricultural festivals in his Decalogue (Ex. 20, 1-12) and seems deliberately to avoid any reference to them. Eissfeldt finds a less enthusiastic attitude in E with regard to the land of Canaan. In Ex. 32,34 (E) Yahweh is said to have referred to Canaan in a tone of rejection as 'that place of which I have spoken to you', whereas J describes it as 'the land flowing with milk and honey' (Ex. 33,3). In the covenant text, E refers to the way in which Yahweh had brought Israel to Horeb, 'I bore you on eagle's wings' (Ex. 19,4) but does not say anything about bringing them to Canaan. Alongside the derogatory reference to Canaan in 32, 34 E has a proclamation of Israel's doom. E's attitude to Israel is similar to that of Amos, Hosea and other prophets. The prophetic influence in E is reflected in his portrayal of Abraham as a prophet (Gen. 20,7). Eissfeldt dates E in the 9th Century B.C.[193]

The Priestly writing is a narrative work parallel to L, J and E. It has a continuous chronology from creation down to the time of its writing in the post-Exilic period. It contains both history and law woven together. P's main concern is to provide a legal foundation for the reconstruction of the post-Exilic social and religious community. In view of the fact that P's influence is found in the books of Chronicles and not in the older historical and prophetical books, even including Malachi, Eissfeldt assigns the work to the 6th or the 5th century B.C.[195]

Eissfeldt differs from Gunkel in that whereas Gunkel views the documentary sources as the work of collectors, Eissfeldt considers them to be the work of creative writers of cultural history. The authors of the sources are historians. The oldest of them, L, writes a history from the creation of the world to the occupation of Canaan which did not exist before. The entire structure of his source derives from his creativity, and the same is the case with J and E. In such a view there is no scope for any structural exploration that goes behind the sources and this is precisely the area in which the history of tradition operates. This lack of any traditio-historical approach is apparent in Eissfeldt, expecially in view of the fact that he does not deal with the transfer of traditions from one patriarch to another. Eissfeldt does speak of tradition and traditions, but by them he means that extant material in the documentary sources which is historically reliable. This is not the same as tradition history.

In his account of the religion of the patriarchs, Eissfeldt gives special attention to the Canaanite stage of the religion of the patriarchs, an aspect which had not been worked out by Alt. Alt points out that the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' was localized at the different Canaanite sanctuaries by the immigrating patriarchs and their clans.

The ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the local sanctuary were told about the patriarchs, who were thus made the founders of these sanctuaries and the recipients of revelations from the local numina. This was the process by which a Canaanite sanctuary was taken over by the patriarchs and their clans.[196] But Alt does not discuss the nature of the Canaanite religion nor the theological and cultural tensions which ensued from this unification of nomadic religion and the religion of the settled land. Eissfeldt envisages a total absorption of the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' (which according to him was no more than image worship[197]) to the extent that the present text has only a few faint reference to the 'gods of the fathers', so that the patriarchs themselves now give the impression of having been worshippers of the god El. It was El-religion that Yahwism met when it entered Canaan, and after a slow process of identification and sometimes of subordination, Yahweh completely surpassed the El-god and assumed his powers as creator of heaven and earth. This view of the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' is difficult to maintain, because they are in fact referred to as frequently as the El-deities. Andersen agrees with Eissfeldt that the 'god of the father' or the 'gods of the fathers' were identified with the Canaanite El when the patriarchal clans entered Canaan, and this is in agreement with Alt. But Andersen does not accept Eissfeldt's assertion that the annihilation of the images of the deities in Gen. 35, 1-4 and Jos. 24, 14-15 refers to the destruction of the 'gods of the fathers'. Andersen maintains, rightly, that the 'gods of the fathers' were not destroyed but continued to exist within the El-cult even after the fusion of the two religions had been accomplished.[198]

It is interesting to note that although Eissfeldt is prepared to agree with Alt to a certain extent about the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' being different from that of the Canaanite Elim, Eissfeldt completely

differs from Alt in attributing 'Promise' to the Canaanite El-deity. Alt clearly emphasizes the idea that the theme of 'Promise' is connected with the 'gods of the fathers' and not with the local Elim.[199] Eissfeldt is certainly right in his view that Yahweh has been secondarily overlaid upon traditions originally connected with El, but his conclusion that the theme of 'Promise' is connected with the El-deity does not seem possible, because 'Promise' is exclusively connected with nomadic religion and not with the religion of a settled people, among whom 'Blessing' ranks as the most important feature in religion.[200] Eissfeldt's insistence that it was the El-deity of Canaan who summoned Abraham from his native land (Gen. 12, 1-3) perhaps provides an answer to the objection raised by Clements in respect of Alt, as to how a nomadic god could be conceived of as promising a land which did not belong to him.[201] Eissfeldt points out that it is the god of the land, the El of Canaan, who appeared to Abraham and summoned him to El's own land. But here the discussion almost verges on the point of understanding the patriarchal narratives as historical accounts. This, however, is in keeping with Eissfeldt's view that the account of Abraham's call at least is a historical one. Von Rad, on the other hand, considers Gen. 12, 1-3 to be the work of the Yahwist, who formulated it as a 'link passage' between the Primeval history and the Salvation history which begins with the patriarchal narratives. It is more a theological formation than a historical report, and, as such, it is difficult to make any historical assertions about it.

Eissfeldt does not give any consideration to the theme of 'Blessing' which appears most frequently in the promise passages in the patriarchal narratives. In spite of the fact that Eissfeldt gives more importance to the Canaanite aspect of the religion of the pre-Israelite tribes, he fails to appreciate the cultural speciality of Canaan and its particular

contribution to theology through its blessing - concept. However, Eissfeldt's positive contribution may perhaps be seen in his emphasis on the אל -orientation of the original patriarchal traditions and their subsequent connexion with Yahwism, and in his drawing attention to the cultural tensions within which the documentary sources evolved in early Israel. These tendencies could also be traced in their attitude to Canaanite religion. The Yahwist considers the gods of the fathers and the Elim as equivalent to Yahweh to the extent that he simply uses the name 'Yahweh' for all of these different deities, whereas the Elohist distinguishes the pre-Yahwistic religion as that of the 'gods of the fathers' and disguises the Canaanite name for the deity 'El' in the common name אלהים , a term not used in Canaan. P, on the other hand, uses the name אל שדי for the gods of the fathers and yet avoids locating him in Canaan. Eissfeldt's approach in terms of the cultural conflicts reflected in the sources perhaps contains pointers for a new approach to the patriarchal narratives.

(2) VICTOR MAAG further elaborates the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' proposed by Alt and emphasizes its importance in the formation of the religion of Israel. Maag identifies three important roots from which early Israelite religion had originated : (i) the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers', (ii) the Yahweh religion localized at the holy mountain, and (iii) the nature religion of the peasant Canaanite culture.[202] In his article 'Der Hirte Israel', Maag discusses nomadic religion and its relation to Yahwism. The worship of the 'gods of the fathers' is older in Palestine than Yahwism, and this is evidenced by the fact that the patriarchal traditions are set before the Exodus tradition in the Pentateuch. It was the appearance of the worshippers of Yahweh

in Palestine which initiated the actual political and religio-historical revolution resulting in the formation of the Israelite emphictyony and the Israelite religion. Thus, Yahweh became the god of the amphictyony and later the national deity. There were certain tribes within the amphictyony who had originally been worshippers of the 'gods of the fathers' and not of Yahweh. These tribes made friends with the Yahweh worshippers, at first under the necessity of common anti-Canaanite purposes, they united with Israel and finally conquered the Canaanites and incorporated them into their community.[203] The religion of the 'gods of the fathers' continued to survive even after the formation of the amphictyony, as these deities were worshipped at the individual clan and tribal sanctuaries, while the worship of Yahweh was carried on simultaneously, but at the amphictyonic central sanctuary in Shechem. The book of Genesis recounts how the 'fathers' had come from the Aramaean land, an area with which Yahwism had no original connexions at all. Genesis avoids any connexion of the 'gods of the fathers' with Sinai or with Egypt, not even in places where the 'god of the fathers' is introduced under the name Yahweh. Similarly, there is no connexion with the Ark. Further, the Yahwist reports that the 'fathers' offered sacrifice, but never describes this as an עולה , a sacrifice which is essentially connected with agricultural peoples.[204] Thus Maag emphasizes that the tradition of the 'gods of the fathers' is still preserved in the various Pentateuchal strata.[205]

In addition to the three patriarchal deities, the 'god of Abraham', the 'god of Isaac' and the 'god of Jacob', with their special names, מגן אברהם , פחד יצחק , and אביר יעקב , pointed out by Alt, Maag identifies a fourth 'god of the fathers' namely 'the god of Israel' with his special name רעה ישראל and a fourth

patriarch 'Israel'.[206] Maag points out the following important characteristics of the idea of God amongst nomadic tribes:

a. Each shepherd tribe forms a social unit with a religious basis. Each tribe has its special 'god of the fathers' who is worshipped as their clan or tribal deity.[207]

b. The 'god of the fathers' is a leader-god, not bound to a place but moving with his nomad people as the shepherd moves with his sheep. He preserves them from thirst, hunger and barrenness, and he protects them in the face of external enemies.[208]

c. The 'god of the fathers' reveals himself to the fathers in visions at different times and in different places. He gives them promise of material goods, good pasture lands and great posterity.[209] The words of this god are given either in the imperative or in the form of a promise. He demands obedience from his worshippers. However, Maag says that this demand is connected not so much with promise as with the numinous experience of the deity himself (15,6).

d. A feeling of solidarity is expressed in the relationship between the god and his worshippers. This is especially reflected in the shepherd's sacrifice, זבח , which is primarily a communal meal. This solidarity could also be seen in the conception of the god as אב or אח .[210]

These nomadic ideas connected with the 'gods of the fathers' belong to the pre-Canaanite religion of the fathers. This religion was later connected with Yahwism. Maag finds this connexion taking place in two different ways : (i) First, the 'god of the fathers' was already associated with Yahweh in Egypt. The tribes which emerged from Egypt already knew both the Sinai numen and the 'god of the fathers' and had the experience of a further revelation of Yahweh in the Exodus event and at

Sinai. (ii) The 'gods of the fathers' of the nomads were associated with the Canaanite deities of the settled peoples. This combined religion was later joined with Yahwism.[211] It was the nomadic consciousness of being on the way under the guidance of the deity 'from the spatial plane to the temporal', which provided a basis for an eschatological perspective for history. This idea was derived neither from the Canaanite cyclic view of history nor from Yahwism, but belongs to the nomadic idea of God. Thus, it was the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers which played a significant role in the formation of early Israelite religion.[212]

In his essay 'Malkut Yhwh'[213], Maag emphasizes similar views and further differentiates between the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' and Canaanite religion. He points out that the consciousness of a nomadic origin has remained with Israel even after the settlement in the Kulturland. The usual tendency amongst nomads is to give up their nomadic ideas completely and to take over the ideas of the settled peoples. But it was different in the case of Israel, who were embarrassed about their Canaanite associations but were never ashamed of their nomadic origins.[214] The fusion between the religion of the cattle nomads and the religion of the agricultural people of Canaan was not without tensions. Maag says that these tensions between the static ideas of Canaanite religion and the kinetic-vectorial elements in the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' continued to exist throughout Israel's history.[215] He draws attention to the following points :

(a) The god of the nomads shows to his worshippers new ways and leads them to patures, hitherto unknown, in which the economic life of the tribes can thrive afresh. This inspiring, leading and protecting nomad god is different from the deities of agrarian peoples. The god of the settled people is bound to a place, whereas the transmigratory god of the nomads is not bound to a place but is constantly on the

move with his people. The relationship between the nomadic god and his tribe is a closely bound one against a homely background. Moreover, piety in this religion is not expressed in cult but in obedience with repsect to the divine inspiration and in showing confidence in the power of the goodness of the deity.

(b) Nomad religion is a religion of promise. The nomad, indeed, does not live in the cycle of seed-time and harvest, but in the world of migration. In the sphere of migration, events are understood as a progression and not as things which happen and are then left behind, because existence as a whole is understood in a historical perspective. This nomadic god leads to a future which is not a mere repetition and confirmation of the present, with the result that the present decision to trust in God's summons is pregnant with future.

(c) The 'god of the fathers' is not conceived as a king but as a leader and shepherd of his people. He is never considered as king. The idea of the kingship of the deity comes from Canaanite religion. But even this idea is transformed by the nomadic concept of god as 'leader' and 'shepherd'.[216]

Maag is indeed right in drawing attention to the syncretistic tensions which arose as a result of the meeting of nomadic and agrarian cultures and religions. But his tendency to emphasize the importance of nomadic religion over against the religion of the Kulturland is not without difficulties. Nomadic religion has its own limitations, in that it has no idea of a god who could sustain his people in one place without having to lead them from place to place in search of new pastures and fresh means of livelihood. Moreover, Canaanite religion is not static, for it contains the idea of a creator god who is responsible for growth and for the fertility of fields, cattle and men.[217] These three, the religion of the 'gods of

the fathers', the Canaanite Elim-religion and Yahwism must have been considered to have important elements, which have subsequently been joined together to form the religion of Israel. Even though one would be hesitant to go the whole way with all of Maag's conclusions, his attribution of 'promise' to nomadic culture may be seen as an important contribution to the whole debate about patriarchal religion. In this view, he is in agreement with Alt, who observed that the theme of 'Promise' is associated with the 'gods of the fathers' and not with the Canaanite Elim. Maag has provided a cultural basis for this biblical observation made by Alt. Further, Maag's approach to patriarchal religion in terms of syncretistic tensions is of special significance for the theology of 'Promise' as developing within the context of the cultural tensions experienced by the pre-Israelite tribes.

(3) IVAN ENGNELL makes a valuable contribution to the study of the religion of the patriarchs in his essay 'The Old Testament Religion'.[218] He does not discuss separately the theme of 'Promise', but his approach to Israelite religion in terms of syncretism is of special significance for an understanding of the development of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives. Engnell draws attention to three important factors which need to be understood for a correct understanding of early Israelite religion : (i) Canaanite religion, (ii) pre-Israelite nomadic religion, and (iii) the process of syncretism.

(i) Canaanite religion.

Engnell points out that there has been a misunderstanding about Canaanite religion, in that it was mainly associated with popular religion, having all the features of primitive religions with orgiastic cultic practices. This popular religion was practised at the high places (בָּמוֹת). But there was another type of religion, which was more

elevated than the במה religion. It was the offical cultic religion with its centres at the great sanctuaries in Canaan. This religion had a lofty conception of God, an idea of messianism and a belief in resurrection. All the cultic practices, especially those connected with messianism and resurrection, were associated with sacral kingship and with the festival of the enthronement of God or New Year festival.

Canaanite religion was the religion of a settled agricultural people. The deity was a high god who bore different names compounded with the common name for god אל . This high god was represented as a sky god, a creator god, a god of fate and a bestower of fertility.[219] The worship of this god was connected with an elaborate ritual and sacrificial system. The temple, its equipment and the officials connected with the cultic ceremonies were highly developed. The New Year festival, with its enthronement of the deity, sacred marriage, the representation of cultic sham fights, the passion, death and victory of the divine king over the powers of chaos, elements which all belonged to Canaanite religion, later influenced a similar Yahwistic enthronement festival.

(ii) Pre-Israelite nomadic or desert religion.

Pre-Israelite religion did not belong to Canaan but came from the desert, and this includes patriarchal religion. Engnell says that it is difficult to reconstruct this religion, as the biblical records are a later assessment of it and since archaeological discoveries do not throw much light upon it either. This religion was a tribal religion with a strong religio-ethical consciousness. The tribal gods were closely associated with their tribes and were characterized by epithets like 'father' (אב) and 'brother' (אח). Among the tribal deities one god, who was a sky god or a high god of the pre-Israelite nomadic tribes, was known by a comprehensive Amorite name, אל שדי , and also as the 'god of the fathers'. The Mosaic group had their own high god יהוה (אל)

who is also referred to as the 'god of the fathers' in Ex. 3,6. Engnell says that the אל of the fathers was a west-Semitic high god, far removed from men and connected with Sinai or Horeb. It was Moses who had experience of this god, activated him from his inactivity, connected him with an amphictyony and established a well organised cult around him. Thus, it was Moses who was responsible for creating Yahwism. The deeply personal, creative, transforming experience of Yahweh was expressed as his intolerance of any association of other deities with him.[220]

(iii) The process of syncretism.

Nomadic religion and Canaanite religion encountered each other during the period of the Settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan. There was a peaceful fusion of the two religions in the early period, although there were some violent conflicts now and then between their adherents. The superior Canaanite religion completely dominated the nomadic culture in material, religious and cultic spheres. The concept of God was transformed by associating יהוה with the Canaanite אל. Yahweh was made the national God and was connected with the great cultic centres of the land, centres which were predominantly connected with fertility cultic practices. Engnell points out that the impact of Canaanite religion was so great that the perspectives of the wilderness religion seem to have vanished altogether. Engnell rejects the usual assessment of this encounter, namely that the Israelites took over the Canaanite cult and all its external furnishings but somehow rejected the religious ideas connected with them. However, he later concedes that certain inferior ideas and practices taken over in the beginning were eliminated subsequently as a result of a series of reactions from the Yahwistic groups.

Yahweh was completely identified with the Jerusalemite sky god, who was also a creator god and a god of judgment and fate. אל עליון was also called צדק and שלם. There was a distinction between these two

deities in that אל עליון was a solar deity, whereas Yahweh was an atmopheric sky god. The slow process of syncretism was finally completed when David assimilated the nomadic Yahweh to the agricultural deity אל עליון of Jerusalem. Along with this identification, the idea of sacral kingship and the cultic ceremonials and furnishings of Canaanite religion were incorporated into Yahweh worship in Jerusalem. Similarly, the deity אל בית אל and other forms of the El-deity worshipped at the different Canaanite sanctuaries were also assimilated to Yahweh. To begin with, there was an enthusiastic assimilation of Canaanite religion, but soon there was a strong reaction from minority groups such as the Rechabites, the seers and the early prophets and even the literary reactionary prophets. The song of Deborah and the story of Gideon are early instances of such an opposition to Canaanite religion and culture. Engnell comments that although the prophets seem to take a polemical attitude towards Canaanite religion, nevertheless, they had also assimilated more from Canaanite religion than they themselves had realised. The God of ~~that~~ the prophets is the God of Jerusalem, El-Yahweh, who is the God of the Davidic dynasty and of the offical religious cult. Moreover, the prophets also accepted the idea of the election of the Davidic dynasty in terms of sacral kingship and messianic ideas and these were definitely Canaanite in origin. Prophetic criticism of the cult was mainly directed against the במה cults, and even there they did not demand ethical action (צדק [221]) instead of cult but demanded both.[222]

Engnell differs from Maag in that while Maag considers Yahwism to be entirely different both from Canaanite religion and from the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers', Engnell supposes Yahwism to be a form of the religion of the 'gods of the fathers'. Engnell seems to agree with Gressmann and Gunkel that the deity 'El' was known outside Canaan as the west-semitic sky god. But, as Baudissin, Alt and others

have emphasized, 'El' is exclusively connected with Canaan and cannot be from outside Canaan.

Engnell's demand for a positive appraisal of Canaanite religion and its influence upon Yahwism opens up new possibilites for understanding how the theology of the Old Testament may have evolved out of syncretistic tensions in the religious history of Israel. The Ugaritic material has widened the perspectives of Old Testament religion. Alt does not discuss at length this syncretistic phase of patriarchal religion in his essay 'The God of the Fathers', although he does postulate a stage during which the religion of the gods of the fathers was associated with the local Elim-cults at the Canaanite sanctuaries. But he perhaps hints at this aspect of the Canaanite contribution in his essay, 'The Origins of Israelite Law', when he says :

> 'It would have been strange to find the Israelites adopting its (Canaan's) material features only, remaining unaffected by the spiritual'. 223

Alt relates the theme of 'Promise' to the ~~nomadic~~ nomadic and sedentary phases of pre-Israelite history.[224] But the theme of 'Promise' itself could be interpreted in terms of this sycretistic tension between nomadic religion and Canaanite religion, because the different ideas of God in these two religions would have different understandings of the theme of 'Promise'. The nomadic deity is connected with guidance and promise, whereas the Canaanite deity is connected with the idea of creation and blessing. Köhler points out the problems connected with a transition from a nomadic culture to an agrarian culture, problems which would demand a transformation of the concept of God to one of the god of blessing, providing continued sustenance, growth and fertility.[225] Like Engnell, Fohrer emphasizes the positive values derived from Canaanite religion and culture.[226] Engnell observes two phases in this cultural conflict and

syncretism. Perhaps the theme of 'Promise' could also be interpreted in terms of the cultural conflict during the period of the Settlement and in the time of the Davidic monarchy.[227]

C. Historical approach to the patriarchal narratives and its relevance to the theme of 'Promise'.

The historicity of the patriarchal stories has been an important feature in the discussion about the patriarchal narratives. Wellhausen does not accord any historical credibility to the patriarchal stories. For him, no historical knowledge could be obtained about the patriarchs, and the present narratives only reflect the period in which the narratives about them had been developed amongst the later Israelites. The patriarchs are ideal figures who embody a style of piety of which the Israelites of the early monarchical period approved.[228] Gunkel, on the other hand, emphasized that the patriarchal stories are not to be judged as historiography, neither as good historiography as the conservatives would have it, nor as bad historiography as the radicals would like to insist upon, but they are poetical narratives based upon ancient sagas. In the introduction to the first edition of his Genesis, Gunkel regards the patriarchal narratives as myths. Accordingly, the patriarchs are considered to be figures of imagination and literary invention. They are not historical figures at all. What the narratives contain is not history but a history of the traditions reflecting the historical process through which these traditions had passed. In the third edition, Gunkel describes the patriarchal sagas as Märchen, that is as Israelite stories developing in cultural conditions appropriate to the semi-nomadic stage of life, connected with a people living on the fringes of Canaan. But even here the patriarchs are in no way considered to be historical figures.[229] Alt and Noth regard the patriarchs as essentially founders of cults, but this does not mean that

they are historical figures. This only implies that these traditions were originally connected with cult and were preserved and transmitted within the cultic context. Noth says that we do not have enough evidence to make any historical assertions about the time, the place, the pre-suppositions or the circumstances of the lives of the patriarchs as human beings. The original traditions were concerned more with the promises made to the patriarchs than with the patriarchs as historical figures.[230] The patriarchal traditions arise from the bread and butter concerns of men at a semi-nomadic stage of life, of men who long for arable land and whose clan cults reflect these aspirations on the part of people among whom the patriarchal traditions originated.

W.F. Albright, on the other hand, emphasizes the historicity of the patriarchal stories. He says that on the whole the picture in Genesis is historical and that there is no reason to question the general reliability of the Biblical details.[231] John Bright takes a more moderate stand and yet criticizes Noth's approach as sceptical and nihilistic[232] and maintains that enough can be said to justify the assertion that the patriarchal traditions are rooted in history.[233] G.E. Wright also maintains the historical reliability of the patriarchal narratives.[234] Bright's approach may be considered representative of the historical approach to the patriarchal narratives, an approach which is characteristic of the American archaeological school.

JOHN BRIGHT considers the Biblical tradition and archaeological evidence to be the two main sources for understanding the patriarchal narratives. He accepts the literary sources of the documentary hypothesis, but, on the whole, follows Noth in postulating a common original source, either in written or oral form, behind J and E. He assigns J to the 10th century but argues that E is a contemporary document and belongs

to a period not later than J. He agrees with von Rad and Noth in seeing the major themes of the Hexateuch/Pentateuch already adumbrated in certain cultic creeds from the early period of Israel's life in Palestine (Deut. 6, 20-25; 26, 5-10; Jos. 24, 2-3). He also notes, in conformity with the traditio-historical school, that the traditions underwent a long process of selection, refraction and normalization, but he points out that the details of this process can no longer be recaptured in the extant narratives. The traditions do not tell us anything about the great empires of the day, not even about the Canaanites among whom Israel is reported to have lived.

While finding the Biblical tradition incapable of providing any historical information, Bright is not unaware of the limitations of archaeology. He points out that archaeological evidence has not proved that the stories of the patriarchs happened just as they are reported in the Bible. No Hebrew ancestor has turned up in any contemporary inscriptions. Archaeology only provides an indirect basis, but it cannot vouch for the historical authenticity of the patriarchal traditions. However, Bright finds a working basis in archaeology, since no evidence has come to light so far to contradict any item in the patriarchal narratives. Having secured this tentative basis, Bright states his method as follows :

> 'The only safe and proper course is a balanced examination of the traditions against the background of the world of the day and in the light of that making such positive statement as the evidence allows.'

In spite of this careful statement, he expresses a certain confidence in archaeology's ability to provide evidence for the historicity of the patriarchal stories, when he adds :

> 'But enough can be said to make it certain that the patriarchal traditions are firmly anchored in history.' 235 .

On the basis of a thorough examination of the names, the customs and the mode of life of the patriarchs in the light of archaeological

evidence, Bright asserts that the stories of the patriarchs fit unquestionably and authentically in the milieu of the second millenium B.C.[236] He finds that this conclusion is supported by the Biblical tradition as well. He sees a fair amount of evidence for this date in the 14th chapter of Genesis, in topography and nomenclature which fit very well into the early second millenium. Yet Bright is not very sure about fixing a precise date, since the traditions represent a still more complex history behind them and since the Genesis narratives tend to telescope traditions of various groups that had arrived in Palestine over a long period of time. In view of these difficulties, Bright sets the approximate limits for the period of the patriarchs and does not attempt to give an exact date. He fixes the patriarchal period between the 20th and the 17th centuries B.C. This was a time of peace in Palestine, when there were no great empires in existence and when Egypt had not yet begun to exercise its control over the country. The movement of the patriarchs suggests such a period of peace in the region of the Fertile Crescent.

Having fixed the Middle Bronze age (2nd Millenium, B.C.) as the most probable period for the existence of the patriarchs, Bright makes three propositions about the historicity of the patriarchs and substantiates them from archaeological evidence : (i) The ancestors of Israel originally came from Upper Mesopotamia to the area of the semi-nomadic population with whom they had close kinship.[237] (ii) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were actual historical figures.[238] (iii) Patriarchal religion as depicted in Genesis is no anachronism but represents a historical phenomenon.[239] Bright musters a mass of archaeological evidence from Mari, Nuzi, the Execration texts, the laws of Hammurabi and of the Hittites and from the Amarna letters to prove these points. Bright argues for the historicity of the Biblical tradition about the Mesopotamian origin of Abraham, on the basis of the fact that the customary law of the Nuzi texts

explains many of the hitherto puzzling problems in the story of Abraham. For example, the custom of the adoption of a slave by a childless family, the giving of the wife's maid to the husband in cases of childlessness, the possession of family gods connected with the right of inheritance and the procedure of buying a piece of land in the Nuzi texts all have close parallels in the patriarchal narratives.[240]

The patriarchs were, according to Bright, semi-nomads living in tents, wandering in Canaan in search of pasture and occasionally making long journies to Mesopotamia and Egypt. They were ass-nomads (not camel-nomads; these appeared only in the time of the Judges) moving within the settled land and on its fringes. They came in successive waves of migration from Mesopotamia and wandered in the central mountain range of Palestine from Shechem to the Negeb. Bright disagrees with Noth's view that the patriarchs belonged to the Aramaean stock and that the centre of the Jacob-Laban stories was in Gilead and that this centre was later moved to Haran when the latter became the centre of caravan trade in later times. Bright argues that the presence of Laban in Gilead does not disprove the Mesopotamian origin of the patriarchs, since there is ample evidence in the Mari texts that such non-sedentary people ranged over a wide area. For example, the Benjamites ('the people of the south', the banū yamīna) are depicted in the Mari texts as moving around within an extensive area.[241]

Bright identifies the patriarchal designation 'Hebrew' (עִבְרִי) with the 'Khapiru', 'Apiru', or 'Habiru', who are mentioned in the Nuzi texts (15th Century), the Mari texts (18th Century) and in Alalakh documents (17th Century), as belonging to the Upper Mesopotamian region throughout the patriarchal age. They are also mentioned in the Cappadocian texts (19th Century), the Ras Shamra texts (14th Century) and in the Amarna letters (14th Century). Bright suggests that the name originally

did not signify an ethnic unit but a stratum in society and considers them to be a class of people without citizenship and without a fixed place in society. They lived peacefully, although they sometimes raided the neighbourhood and often sold themselves into slavery. Bright supports these characteristics from archaeological material. This down-trodden image of the Habiru is also reflected in the Israelite tradition that they were slaves of the Pharaoh in Egypt.

As for the religion of the patriarchs, Bright argues that the tradition in Genesis represents a historical phenomenon. Here he follows Alt in identifying patriarchal religion as the worship of the patron deity of the clan, who has close personal ties with the clan-father. These ancestors were promised land and posterity by their patron gods. This type of god was not located in a place but was always related to a family. After the settlement, these ancestral cults were associated with the local cults and their worship was continued at these Canaanite sanctuaries. Yahweh religion belonged to those tribes who did not settle down early but went into Egypt and later came back and conquered Canaan, a historical event which they interpreted as the fulfilment of the promises made to their ancestors. Bright points out that the personal relationship between a person and his deity is reflected in the personal names which are current both among the early Israelites and amongst her north-western semitic neighbours. These are names compounded with אב 'father', אח 'brother', and עם (עמם) 'people', or 'family', names such as אבי־רם , אחי־רם , אבי־מלך , עמי־אל , עמי־שדי , etc., examples of which are found both in the Bible and in archaeological finds down to the 10th Century, after which time they become rare.

Bright attempts to draw a historical picture of the patriarchs in agreement with the Biblical tradition and he does this mainly by

appealing to the external evidence of archaeology. But he only succeeds in placing them within the most proable period and does not solve the problem of the historicity of the patriarchs. In his exclusive concern for providing archaeological evidence, Bright does not give much attention to the patriarchal traditions as such. Although he recognizes the complex nature of the tradition and its tendency to telescope different traditions,[242] he does not discuss the history of the traditions themselves, although it is this that is important for an understanding of the theology of the patriarchal narratives. Archaeology throws light upon names, places and way of life and helps to recapture things from the past, buried and lost long ago, but it offers little help in unravelling the theological problems connected with the tradition in the present text. Traditions are the living expression of a people, and they give an insight into the stress and struggles, the hopes and fears, the inner experience of those who formulated, preserved and transmitted them. Bright's method misses this dynamic aspect in the interpretation of the patriarchal traditions.

D. The relation of the theme of 'Promise' to the idea of 'Blessing' in the patriarchal narratives.

(1) WALTHER ZIMMERLI introduces a new element into the discussion of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives. Before him, the scholarly debate on the patriarchal narratives was exclusively concerned with the theme of 'Promise', so that 'Blessing' and 'Promise' were considered to be one and the same idea. Ever since Zimmerli drew attention to the presence of the root ברך in 12, 1-3, the idea of 'Blessing' has assumed an important place in the discussion of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives. Westermann further enlarges the theme of 'Promise' in relation to the idea of 'Blessing' in the patriarchal narratives.

Zimmerli discusses at length the theme of 'Promise and Fulfilment' and traces its function in the whole of the Old Testament, extending right into the New Testament.[243] He finds its origin in the patriarchal narratives as formulated by the Yahwist in the Pentateuch. Zimmerli agrees with Alt that the original element of the patriarchal traditions derives from the pre-conquest period of the tribes. Thus, he rejects Galling's view that the patriarchal election tradition was a secondary structure deliberately created during the monarchical period, according to the pattern of the election tradition connected with the Exodus event and in terms of the 'greater Israel' ideology. However, Zimmerli still finds close similarities which he attributes to the work of the Yahwist. It was the Yahwist who made these traditions parallel to each other, when he connected them together in a promise-fulfilment relationship.[244] In agreement with Alt and Noth, Zimmerli thinks that the movement of the individual tribes towards common social and historical functions must have paved the way for the connexion of the traditions of the gods of the fathers with the Yahwistic faith. Further, the common aim of the possession of the land of Canaan in both traditions must have facilitated this association.[245]

Zimmerli attributes to the Yahwist three important contributions, which are similar to von Rad's assessment of the work of the Yahwist.[246]

(i) The Yahwist brought different traditions of the patriarchs belonging to different pre-Israelite tribes into a genealogical and historical connexion when he joined the patriarchal tradition with the Exodus and conquest traditions.

(ii) He connected the originally independent patriarchal and Exodus traditions in a promise-fulfilment relationship. The original promise was the pledge of land, but very soon the pledge of greater posterity was added to it. This posterity-promise can be seen in all three

patriarchal stories in their use of the suspense-building motif of the childless wife.

(iii) The Yahwist prefaced the patriarchal history with the primeval history.[247]

Zimmerli observes a new feature in the introductory promise passage of the Abraham narratives as this has been formulated by the Yahwist (Gen. 12, 1-3). The two main elements of the patriarchal promise, land and posterity, are placed under the show of 'blessing', which Zimmerli says can be clearly seen in the five-fold use of the root ברך. Blessing here, according to him, should be understood as a counter-history to the world-wide history of curse related in Gen. 3-11 (J). In this way the Yahwist has extended the horizons of the patriarchal promise, which originally looked forward to its fulfilment in the conquest, to a much more distant fulfilment in the blessing of all peoples.[248]

The two-fold promise in the Yahwistic narrative is further extended by the Priestly writer who adds to them yet another promise, to the effect that Yahweh will be the God of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17, 6-8). P considers the gift of land and increase to be earnests of the greater promise that the descendants of Abraham will become the people of Yahweh.[249] Zimmerli notices in P a new method of combining the patriarchal tradition and the Exodus tradition, very different from that employed by the Yahwist. The Yahwist combined them in terms of promise and fulfilment, making them both parallel to each other. He has an initial covenant between Yahweh and Abraham and then a second covenant between Yahweh and Israel in the time of Moses. P finds this repetition not very appropriate in the promise-fulfilment scheme and consequently, in his account, does not mention the covenant in the time of Moses at all. Thus, the P document suppressed the covenant motif in the Exodus tradition where it had originally belonged.[250]

Zimmerli underlines the following theological implications resulting from the introduction of the promise-fulfilment theme into the patriarchal and the Exodus-Settlement traditions :

(i) The fulfilment of the promises emphasizes the faithfulness of Yahweh and his word.

(ii) It excludes a mythically orientated faith in God such as was prevalent amongst the neighbouring peoples. The gracious favour of Yahweh towards his people is the result not of mythological acts of Yahweh, but of the promises which he made to the ancestors of Israel.

(iii) The scheme of 'Promise-fulfilment' postulates a historical space between the promise and its fulfilment. It is responsible to a yesterday and looks forward to a tomorrow. This historical distance between a promise and its fulfilment safeguards against the idea of a mystical understanding of God's nearness and an idea of historically unrelated encounter between the deity and his people.

(iv) This historical path stands under a definite tension of waiting and looking forward to a future fulfilment. Zimmerli admits that waiting and hoping are not expressly mentioned but says that the repetition of the promises may have been intended to imply this.[251] History receives a future-orientated outlook which is made clear through the words of promise.[252]

Zimmerli makes a new departure from earlier works on the theme of 'Promise' in the Old Testament which were mainly confined to an examination of the promise passages.[253] Following von Rad's emphasis on context in the interpretation of scripture, Zimmerli addresses himself to the traditions as they developed in the Old Testament in relation to their context. He makes a fresh contribution to the study of the patriarchal promise by drawing attention to theme of blessing in the initial promise

to Abraham,[254] but he does not further examine this theme of 'blessing' in relation to 'Promise'. The five-fold use of the blessing-motif, he says, is invented by the Yahwist to ensure that we realize that here there is a shift from the curse upon the world to blessing upon it.[255] But this explanation seems to be an over simplification, because the theme is repeated again and again in the patriarchal narratives and would therefore seem to call for a more comprehensive interpretation, which would also explain its occurrence in other promise passages.

Zimmerli's differentiation between the method of the Yahwist and the Priestly document has perhaps a far reaching significance for the understanding of the formation of the patriarchal narratives. The tendency of the Yahwist, which Zimmerli observes, to parallel the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinai covenant, probably reflects the idea of blessing in the early traditions. Blessing is connected with a cyclic and repetitive view of history in contrast with 'Promise' which has a progressive view of history. Although the Yahwist has introduced the idea of promise into original blessing stories, there still continues a repetitive view of history in the patriarchal traditions. This perhaps originally belongs to the traditions themselves, which may have been narrated or even written before the Yahwist as blessing stories with a cyclic view of history. This could account for the many parallels in the patriarchal stories, parallels which extend even into the story of Moses.[256] A closer understanding of the function of the blessing-concept would unravel the tensions faced by the early formulators of the patriarchal traditions.

Zimmerli indicates that the patriarchal promise, especially the initial promise-passage in the Abraham cycle (Gen. 12 1-3), should be understood against the background of the theme of the curse stories in

Gen. 3-11.[257] Here he follows von Rad, who points out that the patriarchal blessing is introduced in response to the fact that human history ends on a note of despair in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11).[258] Although there seems to be this element of curse and apparent despair in the primeval history, there are still traces of hope and blessing in it. Westermann sees the idea of blessing and hope in the naming of their children by Adam and Eve (Gen. 4.1.25). The fact that the concept of increase appears in the primeval history shows that it is not altogether a history of curse. The promise of Abraham is already foreshadowed in the blessing of Shem by Noah. Brandon points out how, within the primeval history itself, the foundations are laid for the election of Israel in the patriarchal sagas. Even the conquest of Canaan by Israel and the Philistine occupation of a part of Canaan are already foreshadowed in Noah's blessing of his sons.[259] Commenting on von Rad's remark in his introduction to Gen. 5, that 'nothing more is said ..... of the blessing of man',[260] and on Rendtorff's assessment of the primeval history as one of disaster and curse,[261] Westermann says that it is not possible to make such remarks about the primeval history in view of the presence of the blessing idea in the Yahwistic account of the increase of man through his children in the primeval history, even though the term 'blessing' is not actually used by the Yahwist.[262] The presence of the blessing-concept, foreshadowing the election of Abraham and, through him, of Israel, and the element of hope in the naming of the children makes the primeval history one of hope for man. Thus it may be observed that the concept of blessing is not introduced for the first time into the patriarchal narratives, it is already operative in the primeval history which leads up to the patriarchal history. Through the recognition of the element of blessing in the patriarchal promise-traditions, Zimmerli has opened up new possibilities for the interpretation of the theme of 'Promise' in

the patriarchal narratives and in the whole of the Old Testament.

(2) CLAUS WESTERMANN discusses the theme of 'Promise-blessing' in the patriarchal narratives, from three different angles : (i) the form-critical and traditio-historical approach, (ii) the theological approach, and (iii) the cultural approach.

(i) The form-critical and traditio-historical approach.

Westermann examines the patriarchal narratives afresh, with special reference to the theme of 'Promise', in his article, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis'.[263] His main presupposition is that the pre-literary layers of the Genesis-narratives bear in themselves traces of the pre-historical period, which can still be perceived in the extant literary narratives. He draws his inspiration from Volz[264] who, on the basis of the pre-literary emphasis of Gunkel, arrived at a new solution for understanding the diverse narrative materials in the Pentateuch by completely rejecting the existence of the Elohistic source. For Volz, the Yahwist is the sole collector of the traditions, and, at the most, Volz is prepared to view the Elohist as a new editor of the great narrative work of J, but not as a separate collector. Westermann says that the method of Volz is an advance over that of Gunkel, who, while postulating a pre-literary stage of the traditions, did not clarify the literary and the pre-literary stages of the narratives. Gunkel had only postponed the difficulties from the literary to the pre-literary stage of the narratives. Westermann considers Volz's method to be of great signifiance for the interpretation of the patriarchal narratives, although he himself does not seem to be in full agreement with Volz's conclusions.[265]

In the examination of the pre-literary stages of the traditions, Westermann identifies the original adherence of the theme of 'Promise' to a narrative when the promise in the narrative leads directly from a

situation involving need or tension to its solution. Where this line of the arch does not lead from a tension to its solution, it points to a secondary stage of the tradition, in which the original tension of the narrative which gave rise to the tradition has either been suppressed or altered to suit the new context in which the narrative is now placed. In such cases the pre-literary layer of the tradition would have originally contained a tension or a need-situation from which there was a direct lead to its solution by means of a promise. A genuine promise narrative contains one single promise, connecting the situation involving need with its solution. Westermann acknowledges that this method of ascertaining a genuine narrative is already hinted at by Gunkel in the introduction to his commentary on Genesis, when he says : [266]

> 'Wo die Spannung gänzlich fehlt, wo es keine Verwicklung gibt, da liegt auch keine eigentliche Geschichte vor'.

Westermann applies this method to all the patriarchal narratives in his attempt to ascertain the pre-literary stage of the traditions. Further, Westermann follows Gunkel's Gattungsgeschichte in identifying different types of promise narratives in Genesis. But whereas Gunkel was only interested in the literary aspect of the formation of the traditions, Westermann emphasizes both the literary and the thematic aspects of the narratives in relation to the promise-theme.

Westermann points out that the discussion of the theme of 'Promise to the patriarchs' before him, in the works of Alt, Noth, von Rad and others, was mainly concerned with the relation between the two promises of land and posterity. Their discussion has offered three possible divisions of the promises in the patriarchal narratives : (a) promise of descendants only; (b) promise of land only; (c) promise of land and descendants together. Westermann finds this division very unsatisfactory as it does not include all the different promises. For example, the promise of a son cannot be

included in the first group as it is not about future descendants but represents a special type. Similarly, there is the promise of blessing (Gen. 12, 1-3) or blessing connected with promise in different forms, which cannot fit into any of the above groups.[267] In view of this, Westermann proposes a new division in order to include all the possible variations of the theme 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives : (i) promise of the son; (ii) promise of the son along with the promise of increase; (iii) promise of increase connected with blessing; (iv) land-promise alone.

(i) Promise of the son (Gen. 18, 1-15).

The promise of the birth of a child in a childless family is the chief aim of this type of narrative. The tension of the childless parents is released by a definite promise and, later, by its fulfilment. There is no reference to numerous posterity, nor to the promise of land. This is a genuine promise narrative because the promise of a son forms an essential part of the texture of the narrative. Westermann considers this promise to be the original promise in the patriarchal narratives, out of which all other promises have developed. The promise of a son is connected with the promise of numerous posterity, and this raises the problem of living-space (Lebensraum), a problem which is resolved by the promise of land and later, by its fulfilment in the occupation of Canaan.[268]

(ii) Promise of the son along with the promise of increase (Gen. 16 1-16; 15, 1-6).

In Gen. 16, 1-16 the promise of a son is connected with the promise of numerous posterity. But Westermann finds that the promise of increase has been secondarily added here to an original narrative of the promise of a son. The two promises in 16, 10-12 stand unrelated to each other. Both promises are introduced in the same manner : 10a :- ויאמר לה מלאך יהוה ; 11a :- ויאמר לה מלאך יהוה .

The form of the two verses also points to their different origin :

verse 10b is in prose, whereas 11b is in metric form. Westermann suggests that the narrative originally contained only the promise of the birth of a son, as in Gen. 18, but that the promise of numerous posterity was added as a kind of Leitmotiv, when it was connected with the Abraham cycle. In Gen. 21 also, the promise of numerous posterity has been secondarily added to an original narrative of preservation. The tension in this narrative is created by the risk of the child's dying of thirst in the desert, when Hagar and Ishmael are sent away by Abraham. The narrative tells how God saves the child of Hagar from dying of thirst. The word גַּם 'and also' in verse 13 presupposes the connexion between the promise of a son and the promise of increased posterity in the Abraham-Isaac stories. A narrative of preservation does not necessarily need for its aim the promise of increase, so that although this promise is now skilfully combined in the present narrative, it does not originally belong to the narrative. Similarly, in 15, 1-6 the promise of a son is connected with the promise of descendants, an oracle of salvation and a cultic representation. The original narrative had Abraham's complaint and God's response to it through the promise of a son, but now a further declaration of salvation and the promise of posterity are secondarily added. The presence of the oracle of salvation from the prophetic tradition and its association with cultic materials shows that the original promise of a son has been changed in order to accommodate these new features.[269]

(iii) Promise of increase connected with blessing

Westermann observes that there are several passages in the patriarchal narratives in which the promise of increase is closely connected with 'Blessing' (Gen. 17,16. 20; 22,16; 26,15; 28,3f.; 32,13; 35,9-12; 48,3f.16). He points out three main characteristics of these passages : (a) 'Blessing' is connected with the promise of increase. (b) 'Blessing' always stands before the increase, and increase is given as a direct result of

blessing.

(c) God is the subject both of blessing and of the promise of increase. Westermann illustrates this from Gen. 48, 16 where יִדְגּוּ stands as an explanation of יְבָרֵךְ . This word יִדְגּוּ (a hapax Legomenon) is an old word which was not current in the time of J and E, but it preserves, in a stock formula, the close relation between blessing and increase.[270] Blessing has the power of fruitfulness and effects increase. The promise of increase in this passage derives from a preceding blessing and is therefore not a promise at all. Westermann draws attention to a basic change which was made in the idea of blessing in order to connect it with the idea of promise. Originally, blessing was thought of as becoming effective the moment it was bestowed (Gen. 27-28). It could not therefore be promised at one point of time and fulfilled at a later time. Thus, a 'promise of blessing' (12, 1-3) is a contradiction in terms. It is the Yahwist who first combines the concept of blessing with the idea of promise and thereby joins together two basically different theological concepts. Blessing, which is essentially non-historical, is connected with historical perspective through its association with promise.[271] The old strata of the patriarchal traditions understood increased posterity as an unfolding of blessing and not as a promise, and so the promise of increase results from blessing.

Further elements of promise have been connected with the promise of increase, such as 'your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them' (Gen. 24,60) and 'by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves' (12,3). These later extensions show that the promise of increase was understood throughout the whole of the tradition history as deriving from 'blessing.'[272]

(iv) The land-promise alone (Gen. 12,7; 13, 14-17; 15, 17-21; 24,7; 28, 13-15; 50,24).

In these passages Westermann finds that the original tensions which gave rise to the land-promise are now missing and that new situations have been secondarily introduced in place of the original ones. For example, in 24, 7 and 12, 7, both of which refer to the same promise, the original situation of need in which the land-promise was given to the patriarch and without which it cannot be genuine narrative, is now missing. Westermann suggests that the missing element in the narrative is probably preserved in the little creed, which refers to the precarious situation in which the patriarchs were placed, 'A wandering Aramaean (or 'An Aramaean near to destruction') was my father' (Deut. 26, 5). Similarly in 15, 7ff., the original tension which gave rise to the land-promise is missing. The formula אני יהוה אשר הוצאתיך מאור כשדים is very similar to Ex. 20, 2 אנכי יהוה אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים and presupposes a situation similar to that of the Exodus. But in 15, 7ff., the phrase is an enlarged self-introductory formula and does not indicate a situation of need leading to a promise. Both the complaint of Abraham and the oath of God presuppose such a need situation, which again is perhaps indicated in the Deuteronomic creed. This original tension must have been suppressed to fit the story into a new context, according to which Abraham had already journeyed through the land of promise.

Westermann notes the special importance of the promise passage in Gen. 13, 14-17 for understanding the original context in which the promise of land was given to the patriarchs. This is an enlarged land-promise connected with the promise of descendants, which has been secondarily added to a narrative of separation Gen. 13, 1-13. The land-promise is introduced here to release the tension between two groups whose herds had increased

in size and who were also engaged in a struggle for living-space. The promise is concerned with the extension of living space for the coming generations, who will grow in the same manner. This motif is also found in the Isaac and the Jacob stories. In Gen. 28, 13-15 there are four promises, each of which was perhaps given to release a situation of need or tension. The promise of land (v. 13), the promise of numerous posterity (v. 14b), the significance of promise for all peoples (v. 14c) and the promise of the divine presence (v. 15). Westermann thinks that the promise of land was the original promise connected with the Bethel narrative and that the others have been added later.[273]

(ii) The theological approach

Westermann develops further the theological implications of the idea of blessing in relation to the theme of 'Promise' in his book, Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche. He observes that there are two ways in which the salvation activity of God is represented in the Bible - the delivering-activity and the blessing activity of God. These two aspects together form the unending salvation activity of God in the world in relation to his people. Deliverance is experienced periodically in the acts of God in history, whereas blessing is the continual activity of God in effecting growth and maturity, prosperity and success, increase and decrease and in taking root and in spreading. Deliverance is connected with momentary events, whilst blessing provides continuity between these momentary events and weaves theme into a continuous history of salvation.[274]

Westermann makes the following observations about the implications of this two-fold understanding of the activity of God in the Old Testament for a theology of promise and blessing.

(a) This distinction calls for a new understanding of salvation history in the Old Testament. The saving acts of God towards his people are

no longer to be seen merely in the historical events like the Exodus and the occupation of Canaan but also in unhistorical happenings of growth, increase, acts of power and the physical preservation of the people. An idea of salvation which does not include natural occurrences as part of the works of God cannot comprehend the full extent of the history of God with his people. The Yahwist includes both of these ideas in his account of the salvation history by connecting into one whole three different kinds of historical events, the primeval history which deals with world events and humanity in general, the patriarchal history connected with family events in which the work of God is primarily that of blessing, and the nation's history which tells of the deliverance of the people of Israel and the Exodus. Westermann emphasizes the idea that salvation-history in the Old Testament should be understood in terms of this comprehensive view of the activity of God.[275]

(b) The differentiation between the 'deliverance' acts of God and his 'blessing' acts has its implications for the concept of God. The delivering God is the coming one, whereas the blessing God is the present (or resident, or enthroned) one. Westermann points out that it is not possible to see God exclusively as the coming one, nor is it possible to speak of him solely as the one residing in his sanctuary. Both of these ideas stand side by side in the Old Testament, neither of them absorbs the other, nor do they cancel each other out. The close association of the idea of the delivering God and the idea of the blessing God can be seen best in the transition of the Israelites from a nomadic or semi-nomadic culture to a settled way of life at their entering into Canaan. The signs of the coming-delivering God cease and become connected with the signs of the present-blessing God. Jos. 5, 10f., tells how the manna stopped on the entry of the Israelites into Canaan and how the people then ate from the

produce of the land. The bringing of the Ark into the Temple also emphasizes the transition from the idea of the coming-God to that of the present-God. Westermann observes that the speech of the coming-God is very prominent in the prophets in general, but that the blessing acts of the present God can be seen in Isaiah and Ezekiel, who take their stand on the Jerusalem cult. Prophecy leads to a one-sided emphasis on the delivering-coming God and the institutional cult also leads to a one-sided evaluation of the blessing-present God. Both of these together represent the total history of God with his people.[276]

(c) This two-fold extent of the delivering and the blessing activity of God has an important bearing upon the understanding of salvation. The salvation work of God can no longer be understood in a purely soteriological manner. The Old Testament conception of salvation should assimilate and incorporate both the 'deliverance' acts of God and the other beneficial, positive works of God, especially that of creation. In the patriarchal narratives both the idea of promise (connected with the coming-delivering God) and the idea of blessing (connected with the present God) stand close to each other. This is also the case in the prophetic salvation-promises where the announcement of salvation (promise of deliverance) and the description of salvation (state of being blessed) exist side by side. Westermann notices three distinctive features belonging to the concept of blessing : (i) The Old Testament does not speak of faith in connexion with the blessing acts of God. No response of faith is mentioned in the thankful receipt of the gift of blessing. Similarly the term 'to believe' never occurs in connexion with the speech of the creator or with creation. Faith is connected with the delivering acts of God. Therefore, it is not possible to speak of 'creation faith' in the Old Testament. (ii) The idea of blessing is never connected with revelation. Revelation is

associated with the specific 'deliverance' acts of God and with the announcement of the delivering acts of God, whereas the blessing, creative activity of God in effecting growth, increase and preservation takes place in a continuous manner and is therefore not related to specific revelation.

(iii) The concept of promise itself can be distinguished in terms of this distinction. The announcement of salvation (Heilsankündigung) points to events in the future, while the description of salvation (Heilsschilderung) sets in view the condition of being blessed. The Heilsankündigung stands in the context of the delivering acts of God and the Heilsschilderung in the context of the blessing acts of God.[277]

(d) Both the 'deliverance' and the 'blessing' acts of God are brought together in the worship of the God of Israel. The amphictyonic cult is related to the commemoration of the 'deliverance' acts of God in history. A good example of this close connexion can be seen in the Psalms, where the thanksgiving Psalms proclaim the 'deliverance' acts of God, whilst the hymnic Psalms declare the 'blessing' acts of God, including the act of creation.[278]

(e) This distinction also appears in the offices of the mediators of salvation in Israel. The priest is primarily the mediator of the continued 'blessing' deeds of God, whereas the prophet proclaims the coming, eventful acts of the God of deliverance. Both these together represent the salvation activity of God amongst his people.[279]

Westermann traces the idea of blessing in the whole of the Old Testament. In Gen. 1-11 blessing is connected with creation, and its range includes every living creature. In Gen. 12-50 the sphere of the operation of blessing is the family or clan, and in Deuteronomy it is the people of Israel. The other Pentateuchal books, Exodus to Numbers, contain mainly the history of deliverance, but the idea of blessing is

found in them also. In the historical books, after the establishment of the Jerusalem cultus, the power of blessing is centred in the king, in the priesthood of the royal cult and in the cult-prophets. No importance is accorded to the 'blessing' idea in the prophets, who emphasize, rather, the 'deliverance' and 'judgement' acts of God.[280] And yet it can perhaps still be traced in the description of salvation (Heilsschilderung), which has its roots in the concept of blessing. For example, Jeremiah has a description of the state of being blessed in his letter to the Exiles where it is connected with the idea of deliverance. The 'blessing' idea is found in the worship of Israel, especially in the Psalms, along with the idea of promise. The wisdom concept is related to the blessing works of God. It is something that grows, and it is, therefore, considered to be found especially in old people. Wisdom is regarded as the working out of blessing. The concept of wisdom does not specifically belong to Israel, and it has the universal general character of the blessing idea. As God gave blessing to all living, so wisdom can mature over the whole earth. The book of Job contains both 'wisdom' and 'blessing' ideas, and in it blessing is connected with creation (Job 38-41).[281]

Westermann observes that the Yahwist has effected two important changes in the idea of blessing : (a) He connected the blessing idea with 'Promise' in his prologue to the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 12, 1-3) and in the Balaam pericope (Num. 22-24). In both of these, the originally loose non-historical or ahistorical concept of blessing has been, for the first time, connected with history and thereby made an essential part of the history of God with his people. The continuing effect of blessing is presented in genealogies. Further, the Yahwist connected the promise of blessing with the concept of commission. By connecting blessing, promise and commission, the Yahwist has joined together three great tradition-cycles

which had existed separately from each other, namely the nation's history, the patriarchal history and the primeval history.[282] (b) The Yahwist theologized the concept of blessing by dissociating the act of blessing from the words of blessing. In the old traditions, blessing was connected with a concrete physical act (touch or laying on of hands), by which effective power was passed on from the bestower to the recipient. But this physical act is dropped when God is made the bestower of blessing. The Yahwist spiritualizes the ancient, physically visible act of blessing by associating it with the invisible God.[283]

Westermann points out that certain original features of blessing can still be perceived in the patriarchal narratives.

(a) Gen. 27 has several old features connected with blessing : (i) Blessing is conceived of as vital power transferred from a father to his son. The word 'Blessing' here has the original meaning of the power of fertility and increase. (ii) The father has only one blessing to confer. (iii) The blessing is irrevocable and works unconditionally. (iv) The context of the blessing is the 'departure' of the father who expects to die soon. (v) The blessing rite is performed in a series of acts. The narrative seems to have been formed in accordance with the sequence of the rite of blessing. (vi) The blessing story still has a pre-theological character in that the bestower of blessing is not God but the father. The act itself is described as a pre-cultic rite.

(b) A different type of blessing is narrated in the wooing of Rebekah (Gen. 24, 60). The brothers dismiss the departing sister with a blessing. The blessing-promise is here connected with the promise of overcoming the enemy and this signifies a later stage.

(c) The Jacob-Esau narrative (Gen. 25-27. 32) describes the actual blessing process and its effects.

(d) Blessing gained through a fight (Gen. 32) is a very ancient motif connected with mythical concepts.

(e) The clan blessings narrated in Gen. 49 and Deut. 33, represent, according to Westermann, an intermediary stage between the family blessing depicted in the patriarchal stories and the blessing with which God blesses his people. These were originally individual tribal sayings which were later connected as blessing sayings. Westermann finds a close connection between the blessing sayings and the tribal sayings reflected in Gen. 24, 60 and Gen. 9 25-27.[284] These traces of blessing in the patriarchal narratives point to the fact that the idea of blessing belongs to a period before Yahweh had met Israel. Westermann traces several magical features in the early narratives, features which go back to primitive religion. It is the Yahwist who broke through these traditions with the ancient idea of blessing and made it into a historical idea.

(iii) The cultural approach

In his essay, 'Das Vehältnis der Jahwehglaubens zu den ausserisraelitischen Religionen,'[285] Westermann discusses further the relation of the themes of 'Blessing' and 'Promise' in terms of the encounter of three different cultures and religions. The religion of the gods of the fathers, deriving from nomadic culture, emphasized the promise and guidance of the deity.[286] Canaanite culture, with its fertility religion, emphasized the idea of blessing, and the Yahweh religion, coming from the desert with its consciousness of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, emphasized the ideas of deliverance and promise.[287] It was the meeting of these three elements in Canaan that led to the formation of Israelite Yahwism. Thus Westermann sees the development of the idea of promise in relation to cultural and religious encounters in the early history of Israel.[288]

Westermann finds the concept of blessing to be an important element in the development of the theme of 'Promise' in the patriarchal narratives.

'Blessing' was the peculiar contribution of Canaanite religion and culture. Westermann further sharpens the Yahwist's contribution to the patriarchal narratives which was emphasized by von Rad[289] by tracing the way in which the Yahwist historicized and theologized the pre-Yahwistic, Canaanite concept of blessing in relation to the nomadic idea of promise. It is interesting to go further on the basis of Westermann's conclusions and to ask what necessitated the introduction of the old, magical, 'blessing' stories into the patriarchal account of the Yahwist. The Elohist, on the other hand, completely rejected all traces of the idea of blessing in his account, perhaps because he found the idea of blessing to be inferior to the idea of promise in Yahwism.[290] Could this, perhaps, be due to the fact that the Yahwist saw in the 'blessing' concept of the old traditions a valuable theological contribution which was lacking both in the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' and in Yahwism?[291]

Westermann's observation that 'Blessing' is connected with the idea of creation would perhaps explain the reason why the Yahwist prefaced the patriarchal history with the primeval history. In Gen. 14, 18-24 Yahweh is connected with אל עליון of שלם , the creator of heaven and earth and this association is again made in Gen. 24, 3. The association of the 'gods of the fathers' and, later, Yahweh with the Canaanite Elim would have inspired the Yahwist to write the primeval history. The Canaanite associations of the idea of creation may have prevented the Elohist from attempting an account of the primeval history, since he was suspicious of all that was associated with Canaan. Von Rad attributes the primeval history to the Yahwist but does not discuss why he was inspired to write it.[292]

Westermann's association of the idea of blessing with 'Wisdom' has far-reaching implications for the understanding of the patriarchal narratives. The prudent, clever behaviour of the patriarchs, especially that described in the east-Jordan Jacob stories, has been attributed to the

secular theology of the Yahwist. But this would perhaps appear to be reading too much into the old traditions, in view of the fact that there are strong anthropomorphic ideas in the patriarchal account of the Yahwist.[293] On the other hand, these stories could perhaps be satisfactorily explained if they were originally 'blessing' stories which did not seem to be offensive to the Yahwist and were therefore allowed to remain as part of his account with little revision. The idea that 'blessing' unfolds itself in events and does not have any associations with revelation nor require any credal affirmation of faith would provide a more plausible explanation of these east-Jordan Jacob stories than the attribution to them of lofty theological ideas at such an early period. Thus, the so-called secular theology could perhaps be traced to the influence of the 'blessing'-concept in Canaanite religion.

S E C T I O N - II The theme of Promise in the patriarchal narratives

Promise forms the most important characteristic of the patriarchal narratives. Von Rad describes it as the one element which gives unity to the different traditions :[1]

> 'Although the great narrative complexes concerning the call of Abraham down to the death of Joseph consist in the coalescence of a great variety of material, the whole has nevertheless a scaffolding supporting and connecting it, the so-called promise to the patriarchs.'

This theme of promise is closely associated with the concept of blessing in the patriarchal narratives, and, therefore, passages connected with blessing should also be examined in a study of the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives. These are introduced as the word of God revealed to the patriarchs in different places and in different circumstances. Blessings are given by men (father 27; grandfather 48; brothers 24,60) as well as by God himself. The main content of Promise in the patriarchal narratives is posterity and land, to which certain other elements have been added, such as the promise of El Shaddai to be the God of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17,7) and the promise of the return of Abraham's descendants from Egypt (Gen. 15, 13-16).

The themes of promise and blessing are not just confined to the passages in which they appear, but they extend into the narratives which follow them. A comprehensive understanding of the theme requires an examination of both the promise passages and the narratives that follow them, since the effects of promise and blessing are described in these narratives. Westerman calls for such a comprehensive study of the patriarchal promises in terms of the contexts in which they are now placed.[2] In this section, alongside the exegesis of the promise passages, their implications in the narratives that follow them will be observed.

A. The theme of promise in the Abraham narratives.

All the promises in the Abraham narratives are introduced as the word of God revealed to him (12, 1-4a. 7; 13, 14-17; 15; 17; 18, 9-15. 17-19; 22, 15-17), with the exception of 21, 1-7, which is the narrator's report of the fulfilment of the promise given in 18, 9-15, and 24, 7 which is a recollection of the promise received by Abraham, in his speech to his chief steward.

1. Gen. 12, 1-4a.7 - The call of Abraham

This passage is considered by most critical scholars to be the work of the Yahwist, who formulated it as an introduction to his patriarchal stories and to the entire history of salvation.[3] Von Rad draws attention to the original contribution of the Yahwist in enlarging the tradition of promise to the patriarchs so as to include the whole of mankind in the divine plan of salvation. He calls the Yahwist a true prophet, who provided 'the aetiology of all Israelite aetiology' by welding together the early history of the world and the history of redemption.[4] Westermann explains promise as an arch connecting a situation of tension or need to its solution. Here the tension is created by the situation in Chapter 11, and it is connected by the arch of promise which leads to a solution in the subsequent history of salvation.[5] The passage may be divided as follows : (i) The divine command, c. 1; (ii) The promise of land and posterity, v. 2; (iii) The blessing and divine protection, v. 3a; (iv) The wider implications of the promise, v. 3b; (v) The response, v. 4a; (vi) The promise of land after arrival in Canaan, v. 7.

(i) <u>The divine command (v.1)</u>.

> Now Yahweh said to Abraham, 'Go forth from your land, from your kindred and from your father's house to the land which I will show you.'

The manner of revelation is not related. There is no reference to cult or mediator of the divine revelation, probably to emphasize the direct relationship between God and the patriarch. Müller points out that here God and man stand opposite each other in a kind of dialogue, but that God's act is in the strict sense neither cause nor result of human action. It is God who initiates the conversation. The Yahwist puts at the beginning of the salvation-history an oracle of salvation and not a prayer, to indicate that the relationship between God and man is one of command and obedience.[6] Yahweh is the subject of the first verb at the beginning of the patriarchal story and thus of the entire history of salvation. No reason is given for the choice of Abraham. It is a free choice of Yahweh and a gracious expression of his concern for the whole of mankind.

לך-לך : The promise begins with an imperative, which is a common feature of the patriarchal promises.[7] The pronoun with ך emphasizes the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular subject and may be translated as 'Get thee away'.[8] No natural motif is given for the journey. God's will and command is the motif of the journey of Abraham.[9] מארצך : The native land of Abraham is not mentioned here, but the Yahwist gives it in 24,10 as ארם נהרים . Gunkel draws attention to Ed. Meyer's proposal to locate the original home of the patriarchs in the land of בני קדם (29, 1 E), the great steppe to the east of Palestine. But Gunkel finally favours Ur of the Chaldees because the Yahwist had considered the connexion with ארם נהרים as a temporary visit and had originally connected Abraham with ~~Mesopotamia~~ Babylonia.[10] Noth locates the story of Gen. 24 and the Jacob-Laban stories in Aramaean Haran, from which place it was shifted to Haran on the Euphrates when the latter became the centre of trade in subsequent times. There is support for this conclusion even in P when he says that Abraham set out from

Haran to journey to Canaan (Gen. 11, 31f; 12, 4b.5).[11] The one important emphasis in all the sources is that Abraham came from outside of Canaan and that he came from the eastern region. מולדתך : 'relations', i.e. Terah and the whole tribe. ומבית אביך : The בית־אב is an ancient idea which attained political significance in the post-Exilic period. It refers to a religious, ethical, social and economic unit.[12]

אל־הארץ אשר אראך[13] : Here the promise of land is given a secondary place in respect of the promise of posterity.[14] The land is emphasized only when Abraham enters into the land of Canaan in verse 7. Gunkel suggests that this concrete land-promise is deliberately separated from the call passage in order to present it as a test of faith.[15] Similarly, von Rad thinks that this was the work of the Yahwist who wished to present the promise as a test of faith.[16] Wolff, following Alt's theory of the later origin of the promise of land,[17] suggests that the separation may be in order to indicate the later origin of the land-promise subsequent to the settlement of the pre-Israelite tribes in Canaan.[18] For Noth, the theme of 'promise to the patriarchs' embraces both posterity and land from the beginning.[19] Von Rad also expresses a similar opinion, that although the Yahwist separates the two promises in his prologue, both posterity and land promises belong to the period when Israel's ancestors lived in tents on the edge of the arable land. He underlines the importance of the land-promise from the beginning by naming the ultimate possession of the land as the saving gift par excellence.[20]

(ii) The promise (v.2).

The promise of posterity is here connected with blessing.

> 'Then,[21] I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great, so that[22] you will be a blessing.'

The command is followed by promise. The promise itself is given before any response on the part of Abraham, in order to emphasize that it is a free gift from Yahweh. ואעשך לגוי גדול : The phrase עשה גוי גדול is found besides here only in Ex. 32, 10 and Num. 14, 12 in a secondary J or E text. שים גוי גדול appears in 21, 18 and 46,3. The promise of גוי גדול is also found in Gen. 18.18 (J) and 17,20 (P). The words גוי גדול perhaps indicate that the author has seen the establishment of the Davidic empire, when for the first time Israel became conscious of her position as a sovereign nation.[23] ואברכך : 'Promise' of 'blessing' appears to be a contradiction in itself because blessing becomes effective from the moment of its declaration, while promise points to a future fulfilment. There is no historical distance between blessing and its unfolding such as exists between promise and its fulfilment. Westermann says that the promise of blessing is a bold innovation of the Yahwist, who incorporated blessing (which is the main theme of the patriarchal tradition) into promise (which is the main theme of the history of Israel).[24] Zimmerli observes that the promise of land and posterity is placed in the shadow of blessing in this initial promise to Abraham. The five-fold use of the root ברך (אברכך ; ברכה , אברכה , מברכיך , נברכו) indicates the significance of the idea of blessing for the patriarchal narratives.[25] Müller differentiates between two types of blessings, namely the blessing sayings and the blessing declarations. The blessing sayings become effective immediately as a result of the words spoken, whereas the blessing declarations are connected with the future acts of God. Formal blessing sayings use the optative form (nominal sentences, imperative, jussive); blessing declarations, on the other hand, always use the indicative verbal form. Thus, Müller emphasizes that the blessing declarations connected with the future acts

of God make it altogether impossible to understand blessing in a dynamistic and magical sense.[26] It may be observed that it is the association with God which breaks the blessing concept from its old associations and ideas. Westermann suggests that the ancient blessing idea has been spiritualized and theologized by its association with the invisible God.[27]

The meaning of the root ברך has been much discussed. At least three different meanings have been suggested. (i) ברך 'to kneel' with its derived noun 'knee'. (ii) ברך 'to bless'.[28] Delitzsch suggests that ברך 'knee' and ברך 'blessing' come from a common root meaning 'to stride', 'to tread'. From ברך 'knee', thought of as the movement for the forward stride, there developed ברך 'to bless', in the sense of advance, progress and success.[29] Jastrow, on the other hand, suggests that ברך 'knee' developed from the root meaning 'to be clear', 'to purify', 'to bring to prominence' and from this there developed the sense 'bless'. The general basic meaning would be 'to cave out' and ברך 'bless' would then have the meaning 'select' or 'point out'.[30] The connexion between ברך 'knee' and ברך 'bless' have been explained in a ritualistic sense of kneeling before the deity. Kneeling here indicates the posture in which the blessing was received. But Wehmeier points out that ברך has been used in the sense 'to pay homage', or 'to praise' only in the Bible and that it is not used in this sense elsewhere. In Ugarit, Baal kneels before Anat to express a wish,[30a] but the root used here is kr' and not ברך. Moreover, the word cannot be connected with the posture adopted for receiving a blessing because the verb expresses an active meaning, 'to convey blessing', and not a passive sense.[31] Pedersen emphasizes the meaning 'womb' from the Akkadian root birku meaning both 'knee' and 'womb'.[32] Murtonen also understands ברך in the sense of fertilization.[33] Plassmann connects ברך with the pre- Islamic Arabic word بَرَكَ , which referred to the camel 'lying upon its breast', connected with the idea of beneficience, prosperity, felicity, etc.[34]

Chelhod finds a close connection between the words רכב and ברך.[35] Thus ברך is connected both with knee and with blessing through the idea of blessing, fertility and progress. (iii) The Akkadian word karābu is usually connected with the word ברך 'bless', but Wehmeier thinks that this is not possible because karābu does not mean 'bless' but 'do homage', or 'pray'. ברכה is never used in the sense of prayer.[36] In view of the above observations, the basic meaning of ברכה could be determined as blessing, progress, fertility, and power of abundant life and prosperity. Pedersen identifies three important characteristics of blessing in the patriarchal narratives : (a) it effects numerous posterity, (b) it brings about well being and prosperity for the recipient of blessing, and (c) it gives power over the enemy.[37] The patriarchs had posterity, they were protected, they increased in wealth, and the possession of the land of Canaan is implied in the third element of overcoming the enemy. This aspect of overcoming the enemy is especially emphasized in the promise passages in 22,17; in the blessing of Rebekah by her family 24,60 and in the blessing of Jacob by Isaac 28,4. In all these it is connected with the possession of the land of Canaan. In Gen. 12, 1-3 the first two aspects are prominent, whilst the third is modified in terms of Israel's mission to other peoples. The Yahwist indicates that the mission of Israel is not accomplished by overcoming other peoples but in being the means of blessing for them.

ואגדלה שמך ; 'and make your name great', is cited as the direct result of blessing. Von Rad suggests that there is an allusion here to the Tower of Babel, where men wanted 'to make a name' for themselves (ונעשה-לנו שם 11,4). In contrast to this, it is emphasized here that Abraham's name will be made great by Yahweh.[38]

וְהְיֵה בְּרָכָה : The initial high point of the promise is reached in this result clause. Here the intention of the call is mentioned, 'so that' (or 'in order that') you will be a blessing.[39] Gunkel suggests changing וְהְיֵה to וְהְיֶה on the grounds that a cohortative is to be expected after an imperative and translates, 'that he shall become a word of blessing'. But Wolff points out that there is no need for this change for two reasons : (a) A consecutive clause in the second person after a cohortative is formed with the indirect imperative (I Kings 1,12; II Kings 5,10) and such consecutive clauses have the sense of result as well as that of intention. (b) Gunkel's change has no textual support nor is it necessary in terms of the context.[40] God wills to make Abraham into a great and mighty people so that he and his descendants may be bearers of blessing.

(iii) The blessing and divine protection (v.3).

'I will bless those who bless you, but whoever
despises you, him will I curse.'

מְבָרְכֶיךָ 'those who bless you' is in the plural whilst מְקַלֶּלְךָ 'the one who despises' is in the singular, perhaps to indicate that those who despise would be fewer than those who bless. Skinner suggests reading plural with some manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, the Vulgate and the Peshitta,[41] but the singular is perhaps intended by the author and may therefore be retained. The root קלל means 'to be slight' or 'trifling'[42] and may be translated as 'Whoever despises you (or 'treats you with contempt'), him will I curse'. Wolff points out that the Yahwist takes the idea of curse and blessing from the cult tradition and changes it in three ways in this passage : (1) The Yahwist changes these cultic words of blessing into a promise made by God to Abraham. (2) He changes the usual form 'He who curses you' to 'he who despises you'. The Yahwist is here thinking of God being associated with Abraham and later with

Israel, so that despising them would bring about the displeasure of Yahweh. (3) He uses the singular[43] for the one who despises compared to the many who would bless Abraham.[44] A further change may be noted in the construction of the Yahwist here. The wording ואברכה מברכיך ומקללך אאר is similar to but arranged in the reverse order from that of the blessing of Jacob in 27,29c ואריריך ארור ומברכיך ברוך. The Yahwistic account of the Balaam blessing also has blessing before curse מברכיך ברוך ואריריך ארור (Num. 24,9). It may perhaps be concluded from this that the original formula[45] had curse followed by blessing but that the Yahwist has changed it to make it begin with a blessing. This verse could also be understood as protection offered by Yahweh to his servant Abraham. God not only calls his servant but also offers him protection. This is a frequently recurring theme in the call passages of the prophets (Jer. 1,8; Is. 42,1). This promise of protection becomes immediately effective in the story of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt (12, 10-20).

(iv) <u>The wider implications of the promise to Abraham (v.3b)</u>.

'So, then, all the families of the earth can
procure blessing for themselves in you.'

ונברכו : The Niph'al form of ברך is used only by the Yahwist in the Old Testament. He uses it twice more in 18,18 and 28,14. In 22,18 and 26,4 the Niph'al is replaced by the Hithpa'el, which is reflexive and must be translated 'bless themselves'. Müller suggests four possible meanings for the Niph'al and says that the meaning here hangs between these four possible translations.[46] (1) the passive meaning - 'they may be blessed'[47]; (2) the middle 'they procure blessing for themselves'[48]; (3) the reflexive - 'they wish themselves blessing'[49]; (4) the active - 'they be called happy'. Similarly, Wehmeier mentions four possible

translations in reflexive, reciprocal,[50] medial and passive senses. However, Wehmeier points out that if the Yahwist wanted to express a passive meaning he would have used the Pu'al which the Yahwist has used in Num. 22,6. This indicates that here the Yahwist perhaps wants to emphasize a special meaning by employing the uncommon Niph'al form. Wehmeier prefers the meaning suggested by Schreiner, 'to procure blessing for themselves'.[51] Procksch also has a similar meaning for the Niph'al, 'to find blessing'.[52] Wehmeier points out that verse 2b already emphasizes the fact that Abraham would be the means of blessing, and if verse 3 is translated with a passive meaning, it would result in an anticlimax. He therefore suggests an active role for the peoples of the earth in procuring blessing.[53] In this respect, Junker makes a useful suggestion, to the effect that the Semitic reflexive forms are not primarily statements about a fact but about a happening which the subject of the statement himself comes to know or experience. According to him, the reflexive stem of ברך signifies not an active declaration of the blessing over oneself, but an experience of the blessing for oneself, a participation in the blessing.[54] Thus the rendering 'in thee all the families of the earth will experience (participate in) blessing', would give them an active role and not a passive one. Blessing, originally deriving from Canaan and Canaanite cult-religion,[55] is associated with an active role on the part of the worshippers in creating blessing. For example, the devotees took part in the cultic fertility rites to ensure the fertility function of the deity in his creative activity. Through the use of the Niph'al in the promise passages, the Yahwist dissociates the idea of blessing from these magical cultic rites and yet preserves its important contribution in terms of the participation of the people in the creative activity of God. Promise calls for obedience, for passive expectation and faithful waiting for its fulfilment, whereas blessing calls for

human co-operation and action in the divine creative activity in the world. Through the incorporation of blessing into promise, the Yahwist not only theologizes and historicizes the concept of blessing, but also refines the theology of promise itself, with the result that it now offers an active role of partnership with God in the history of salvation, not only to Abraham but to all the peoples of the world.

בך , 'in thee', points to the role of Abraham and, later, Israel as mediators of this blessing. The peoples themselves are not passive recipients but active participants with Israel in sharing this blessing. Abraham will act as the mediator of the divine blessing in effecting life and promoting longing amongst the peoples for a fuller and more abundant life. Wolff works out in detail how this aspect of promise was fulfilled to the patriarchs and what its implications were for the people of the Solomonic empire. Abraham's dealings with the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, his dealing with Lot and his intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah, Isaac's dealing with Abimelech, Jacob's relations with Esau and Laban and Joseph's work in Egypt are all illustrations of the effect of this blessing upon the peoples. The Yahwist challenges his contemporaries in their rejoicing over their position of privilege and points out that this privilege brings in its train responsibility. Wolff points out that this consciousness of responsibility takes away all ambitions of political supremacy over other nations.[56] It is an awareness not of superiority over others but of mediation of the divine blessing. Altmann emphasizes that election in this passage should be understood in a more positive sense than the later particularism which tends to have a negative attitude towards other nations. He finds in this a unversalistic attitude on the part of the Yahwist and calls it 'charitable universalism (karitativen Universalismus)' according to which the election of Israel is not part of the original plan of God

but a later one, though even this is connected with a blessing to all peoples.[57] This characteristic of the Yahwist is reflected in his special interest in other peoples within the Davidic-Solomonic empire and in his lack of interest in describing the Sinai tradition.[58]

(v) The response (v.4a)

'And Abraham went as Yahweh told him.'

The initial response of Abraham is given unconditionally. Although, later, doubts and fears are expressed when the fulfilment of the promise is delayed, here Abraham obeys without a word. In all the promise passages this element of obedient response is emphasized. In 15,6 Abraham believes in God, and this is counted to him as righteousness. Then he is asked to offer a sacrifice and he does it with great care. In chapter 17 Abraham obeys God's command to practise circumcision. In chapter 22 he obeys God's command to offer up Isaac. Abraham's attitude towards God may be summed up as one of 'obedience', and this is confirmed by the angel of God when he says 'Because you have obeyed my voice .... ' (22,18).

(vi) The promise of land after arrival in Canaan (v.7).

> 'Then Yahweh appeared unto Abraham and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built there an altar to Yahweh who had appeared to him.'

The first mention of land-promise is here connected with Shechem, and the land is promised to the descendants alone and not to the patriarch at all.[59] Thereby the Yahwist enlarges the span between promise and fulfilment and sets the land-promise from the beginning within the context of Israel as a whole. Later, the fulfilment is extended to the fourth generation (15,16). Here the Yahwist seems to make a distinction (like P later in chapter 17, who uses the term אֶרֶץ מְגוּרִים to express the relationship of the patriarchs to the land of Canaan) between the

patriarchs who were only 'shown' the land, whilst their descendants were 'granted' (נתן) the land. The use of נתן emphasizes the free gift of Yahweh. The possession of the land in the patriarchal narratives is attributed not to the strength of Israel, but to the gracious gift of Yahweh. Here an original promise to the patriarchs is enlarged to include later Israel, and in this way a historical span is stretched between the promise and its fulfilment. In these opening verses the Yahwist draws out his theological presuppositions for writing the history of Israel, which is in fact a history under divine guidance with promise and blessing and an expectation of the future fulfilment of the purpose of Yahweh for Israel and for the whole of mankind.

The account of Abraham's building of an altar to Yahweh in Shechem probably indicates the process of the taking over of the Canaanite shrines by Israel during the period of the settlement. The word מקום describes a Canaanite cult centre.[60] Alt calls this the first Israelite stage, when the patriarchal religion of the 'god of the fathers' was localized in the Canaanite sanctuaries.[61] The tree sanctuary is called אלון מורה , and it was the focus of a Canaanite cult centre to which people came for oracles. Gunkel suggests that מורה was an איש אלהים who lived at the cult centre and gave oracles.[62] But this is suppressed in the present Genesis narrative. The connexion of Abraham with Shechem and Bethel in Gen. 12, 6-8, is considered to be a later one introduced after the Abraham-Isaac traditions from Hebron became associated with the Jacob traditions in the north. Noth suggests that the tradition about moving from Shechem to Bethel in 12, 6-8 originally belonged to the Jacob traditions and were transferred to Abraham when the latter became the ancestor of Israel and thus the father of Isaac and the grandfather of Jacob.[63] Kilian also thinks that the land promise tradition in Gen. 12 was originally connected

with Jacob and was secondarily transferred to Abraham. He considers that the whole of Gen. 12 was formulated as an introduction to Gen. 13.[64] Thus, the promise of posterity, blessing and land are all introduced by the Yahwist in the introduction to his patriarchal account and to the entire history of salvation.

2. Gen. 13, 14-17 - The reiteration of the promise.

Wellhausen considers this passage to be a later addition.[65] Gunkel thinks that chapter 13 was originally a secular story which ended with verse 13 and was perhaps immediately followed by chapters 18 and 19. This promise passage was added secondarily by the collector who was not content to have a secular explanation of Abraham's possession of the land to the effect that it was due to the separation of Lot. The author wants to emphasize that the land was God's gift to the patriarch and not a mere result of secular events.[66] Von Rad sees this whole chapter as an organic whole which reaches its climax in these verses. He says that the Yahwist did not find this promise in the old tradition but that he had extended the old tradition-material in accordance with the special theme of promise.[67] This again has been formulated by the Yahwist in order to introduce the materials which he had received about the patriarchs. Kilian, on the other hand, considers chapter 13 to be an aetiology explaining the reason why Abraham possesses only a part of the land, although the entire land of Canaan had been promised to him. According to Kilian, no pre-Abrahamic or pre-Israelite saga exists behind chapter 13. The narrative is not a historical report but an aetiological solution to a theological problem regarding the discrepancy between promise and fulfilment. The present narrative about 'strife amongst shepherds' is employed by the narrator to portray the problem in a lively manner. The aetiology points to a period between the Settlement and the formation of the

Israelite state under David. The historical circumstances reflect the occupation of the west hill-country by Israel and the settling of the Moabites and the Ammonites in the trans-Jordan area. This was the period when Abraham was attracting to himself traditions which were originally connected with Jacob.[68]

The conditions under which Lot separates from Abraham presuppose a nomadic background when there was strife about pasture lands and watering places. The story in this chapter is similar to those in chapters 21 and 26, where Abraham and Isaac are represented as having strife with the Philistines. Westermann terms the motif of these stories 'Streit um den Lebensraum' and considers the present passage to be a secondary addition.[69] The story shows clearly what significance the land-promise motif would have had for the patriarchal stories. The promise passage is introduced here to provide the arch between the tension of loneliness and its solution in the promise of land and posterity, leading to the assurance that Yahweh is still with Abraham. Here the promise of land has precedence over the promise of posterity. The author does not ascribe any merit to Abraham, which he could have done by drawing attention to the magnanimous behaviour of Abraham in his relations with Lot. He emphasizes, on the other hand, the fact that it is the gift of Yahweh to Abraham and to his posterity. עד־עולם : The promise of permanent possession of the land is a new feature here.

This promise passage may be divided as follows : (i) the divine command v. 14; (ii) the promise of land and posterity v. 15; (iii) the description of the state of salvation (Heilsschilderung), v. 16; (iv) the summons to take possession of the land, v. 17 and (v) the response v.18.

(i) The divine command (v.14).

> And Yahweh said to Abraham, after Lot had separated himself from Abraham, 'Lift up

your eyes and see from the place where you are, to the north, the south, the east and the west (lit. 'the sea').'

אחרי הפרד־לוט : Rashi comments that so long as the wicked Lot was with Abraham, the word of God kept away from him. But this is not so, because in Chapter 12 it is reported that Lot is with Abraham and yet God appears to Abraham.

שא נא עיניך וראה מן־המקום" : An imperative precedes the promise as in 12, 1.[70]

(ii) The promise of land and posterity (v. 15).

'For all the land which you see, I will give to you and to your descendants forever'.

לך אתננה ולזרעך : Hoftijzer argues that the references to the possession of the land by the patriarchs themselves, which are only a few in his El-Shaddai group (17,8; 28,4; 35,12) and Gen. xv group (13,15; 28,3),[71] are traditio-historically late and that they were secondarily inserted into the existing structure of the patriarchal narratives. For Hoftijzer, the tradition of the land-promise originated at a time when the possession of the land of Canaan was in grave danger for Israel, possibly during the later part of the period of the monarchy, or even during the Exilic period. Alt emphasizes that the land-promise belonged to the Settlement period, whilst Noth and von Rad think that the promise of land together with the promise of posterity belonged to the pre-Canaanite nomadic period of the early tribes. Noth points out that the patriarchal traditions were of importance in the pan-Israelite context precisely because they had within them this element of land-promise, which was interpreted as fulfilled in the time of the Settlement.[72] Moreover, according to Noth, the theme of 'Promise to the patriarchs' already formed one of the main pentateuchal themes connected with the central amphictyony

in Shechem.[73] Therefore it would be strange if the theme of promise evolved for the first time when the possession of the land was in jeopardy for Israel.

ולזרעך : The noun זרע is regularly employed in the land-promise passages.[74]

(iii) The description of the state of salvation (Heilsschilderung),(v.16).

> 'And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if one is able to count the dust of the earth, your descendants also will be able to be counted.'

Westermann points out that the description of the state of salvation belongs to the idea of blessing, which is closely associated with the idea of promise in the patriarchal narratives.[75] Although there is no explicit reference here to blessing, it is implied in the description of the future state of salvation. A similar description is found in the Yahwist's account of the promise to Jacob (28,14).

(iv) The summons to take possession of the land (v. 17).

> 'Now,[76] walk[77] through the length and breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.'

The Septuagint adds καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ('and to your descendants for ever'), perhaps under the influence of verse 15 ולזרעך עד-עולם . It is interesting to note that this is the only passage in which the patriarch is promised land and where there is no mention of his descendants. It is possible that this passage is perhaps an example of the original promise of land which aimed at fulfilment for the patriarch himself and which was later enlarged to include his posterity and thus made to look forward to a much more distant fulfilment during the period of the Settlement in Canaan.[78]

Abraham is summoned to move up and down the land symbolically to occupy the land and thereby to anticipate the actual receiving of the land in the future. In the Baal epic, Baal is said to have moved from city to city, assuming possession of sixty-six cities.[79] This is a symbolic way of taking possession of the land.

(v) The response (v. 18).

> Abraham moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Yahweh.

In verse 17 Abraham is summoned to go throughout the length and breadth of the land, but in verse 18 it is reported that he moved his tent and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre. Verse 18 would be very appropriate immediately after verse 12. Abraham 'dwelt in Canaan' (ישב בארץ כנען) but Lot 'dwelt in the cities of the valley' (ישב בערי הככר); Lot 'pitched his tent' (ויאהל) near Sodom, but Abraham 'moved his tent' (ויאהל) and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which is near Hebron. Noth observes that the Abraham tradition originally belongs not to the tree sanctuary of Mamre, but to the Negeb, from which place Abraham was secondarily introduced into Hebron when the six-tribe southern confederacy was formed there.[80] It was in Hebron that the traditions about Lot and about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah were joined to the Abraham traditions. The double cave tradition of Machpelah as the burial ground of Sarah and Abraham was also developed here and later incorporated into the Abraham narratives by P. Even though the original Abraham traditions belonged to the Negeb, once Abraham was associated with Hebron, new traditions were attached to him. The Yahweh religion at first centred in Shechem was later brought into connexion with Hebron and as a result Abraham was given precedence over the other patriarchs Isaac and Jacob. The notice about Abraham building an altar in Shechem (12,7) represents a later stage of the tradition when Abraham was made the chief

ancestor of Israel. The promises of land and posterity in vv. 14-17 are picked up again in Gen. 15,2. If v. 18 is placed after 13,12, the promise passage in vv. 14-17 leads directly to chapter 15,2.

3. Gen. 14, 18-22 - Blessing associated with אל עליון .

Gen. 14 is generally considered to be a very late tradition belonging to none of the main pentateuchal sources.[81] Von Rad says that in Gen. 14 we are dealing with a tradition which was quite separate from the rest of the Pentateuchal tradition.[82] Similarly, Noth also considers it to belong to a late tradition.[83] Scharbert, on the other hand, objects to this view and asks why it should not be considered to belong to pre-J traditions which J then incorporated into his work, in order to show that the promise in 12. 1-3 has already begun to be fulfilled.[84] Lohfink also suggests that Gen. 14 could have belonged to a period prior to that of the Yahwist, who later incorporated it into his own work, so that there now exists a close connexion between Gen. 14 and 15. However, he is not prepared to commit himself to giving Gen. 14 a date earlier than the Yahwist and finally says that it is in fact later.[85]

Zimmerli examines Gen. 14, 18-20 and points out that although there are similarities between Gen. 14 on the one hand, and J and P on the other, still there are important differences which make it difficult to assign an earlier date to this passage. Gen. 14 connects Abraham with Jerusalem, but the three main sources are agreed about the fact that Abraham was never associated with Jerusalem. The Yahwist, in his account of the journey of Abraham in Canaan (Gen. 12), mentions three famous sanctuaries of the time - Shechem, Bethel and Hebron, but avoids altogether the mention of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, although it is situated on Abraham's route from Bethel to Hebron. The Elohist seems to limit Abraham's movements to the Negeb around Gerar and Beersheba and has

no reference to Jerusalem. Similarly the Priestly source mentions only Hebron as the ארץ מגורים of the fathers and does not refer to Jerusalem. On the basis of this, Zimmerli argues that the connexion between Abraham and Jerusalem points to a later date after the capture of the city by David (II Sam. 5, 6-8).

However, Zimmerli finds certain tradition-threads of both J and P reflected in Gen. 14, 18-20. The three-fold appearance of the key word of the passage, ברך , is similar, in its emphasis on this theme, to the usage of the Yahwist in his account of the call of Abraham (Gen. 12, 1-3). But the meaning of the word and the manner of the bestowal of blessing is different in the two passages. In Gen. 14 it points to victory in war and is pronounced by a priest of אל עליון , whereas in 12, 1-3 ברך is connected with fruitfulness, growth and increase, and is directly spoken by Yahweh to Abraham without the mediation of a priest. The blessing in 12, 1-3 brings 'blessing' to the peoples, whereas in Gen. 14 it speaks of victory over enemies. The name אל עליון in Gen. 14 is similar to P's designation for the god of the patriarchs, namely אל שדי , (Gen. 17,1). It calls to mind the theology of P, according to which, Yahweh had encountered the patriarchs under the name of אל שדי til Ex. 6, 2ff., when he revealed his name 'Yahweh' to Moses for the first time. P had himself taken this scheme from the Elohist, but he coins this special name for E's 'god of the fathers', in order to emphasize the fact that there was a time when God was worshipped as אל in Canaan in the pre-Israelite period. But here the similarity ends, for אל עליון is described as 'the maker of heaven and earth', whereas P's El Shaddai is not given such attributes at all. P has indeed an account of creation but there is no mention there of the name El Shaddai, and, moreover, this deity is particularly designated as the god of the patriarchs.[86]

Thus, although there seems to be a close connexion between Gen. 14 and other patriarchal narratives, there are such important differences between them that it is not possible to attribute any date to Gen. 14. The passage, however, is of special significance for this study as it is the only example, though perhaps a late one, of the way in which Yahwism was connected with Canaanite El-religion. It indicates the manner in which the traditions of the patriarchs were incorporated into the El-sanctuaries, in this case into the sanctuary of El Elyon at Jerusalem. Jerusalem became accessible to the Israelites only in the reign of David, by which time Yahwism was already established as the amphictyonic religion of the Israelite tribes. So when David moved the Ark to Jerusalem it was the religion of Yahweh that was incorporated into the אל עליון cult of Jerusalem. There is no reference to the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' because they had already been identified with Yahwism, and the patriarchal traditions, which originally belonged to the nomadic milieu, had become part of the traditions of the central amphictyony. Gen. 14 preserves the memory of the incorporation of Yahwism into the local Canaanite אל עליון cult in Jerusalem. Schmidt observes that El Elyon in 14, 18ff., is not identified with the gods of the fathers but with Yahwism.[87] This would perhaps point to the fact that the identification of Yahwism with El Elyon of Jerusalem took place at a much later date than the incorporation of the religion of the gods of the fathers into the local Elim religion. The incorporation in Gen. 14 is made on the basis of 'Blessing' which is mentioned three times in this brief passage. Abraham receives the blessing from the royal priest of the deity אל עליון of שלם. Abraham gives his tithes to the priest of the deity El Elyon, a sign of his acknowledgement of this deity and perhaps also an expression of his thanksgiving for his victory in battle. While Melchizedek

blesses Abraham by his deity אל עליון , Abraham swears by יהוה אל עליון . The LXX omits יהוה ,[88] so do Aquila, the Peshitta and the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran. The Samaritan text has the theologically less objectionable יהאלהים . Gunkel considers יהוה to be a later addition.[89] Von Rad says that such a positive, tolerant evaluation of a Canaanite cult outside Israel is unparalleled in the Old Testament and that even the paying of the tithe is quite unusual from the Old Testament standpoint. Von Rad attempts to solve the difficulty here by explaining that the initiative came from Melchizedek and that Abraham was only submitting to the former's action.[90] This explanation, however, is not very convincing. It may be argued that this was precisely what the tradition meant to convey, namely, to show that the pre-Israelite tribes did take part in the Canaanite cult and had a positive attitude towards the local Elim-cults to the extent of receiving blessing from the priests of these sanctuaries. It was the Israelites who equated their special God יהוה with אל עליון and attributed to him features, which originally belonged to the Canaanite deity. Yahweh is here identified with אל עליון and is given the attributes of the latter-קונה שמים וארץ . The priesthood, temple-furniture, cultic ceremonial, agricultural festivals[91] and perhaps even the Canaanite images still continued as part of the worship of Yahweh in the local Elim-sanctuaries.[92]

Thus Gen. 14, 18-22 confirms Alt's hypothesis that the immigrating tribes had incorporated their deities into the cults of the local Elim sanctuaries and narrated the ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the local sanctuaries about their own ancestors, whom they then considered to be the founders of these cult places and the recipients of revelations from these deities. Although Gen. 14 does not belong to any of the main Pentateuchal sources, it is still important in that it provides a clue to the understanding of the way in which the religion of the immigrating tribes was incorporated

into the local Canaanite religion. It has, indeed features in common with both the Yahwist and the Priestly writer and preserves memories of ancient ideas about Jerusalem. Perhaps it has also preserved a distant memory of the way in which the immigrating nomadic tribes incorporated their religion into the religion of the settled peoples in Canaan. Certain points may be noted about this process from the tradition preserved in Gen. 14.

(1) Peaceful relations seems to have existed between the immigrating tribes and the local population. This is emphasized again and again in the patriarchal narratives. Abraham's relations with Lot, his relations with Abimelech, Isaac's relations with Abimelech and Jacob's dealings with Laban and even with Esau with whom he is finally reconciled, are peaceful ones.

(2) The Israelites received blessings from the local deities. 'Blessing' is the special feature of the religion of the sedentary peoples, a concept which is not so prominent in the nomadic religion of the immigrating tribes. Yahwism, being more akin to the religion of the gods of the fathers,[93] did not have this concept.

(3) This transition from nomadic religious ideas to the religious ideas of the sedentary peoples was not considered to be apostasy during the period of the Settlement. It was only later that conservative elements in Israel opposed this process, but they were in a minority.[94]

(4) Abraham is reported to have paid his tithes to the priest of [illegible]. This is a regulation associated with agricultural religion,[95] and the fact that the patriarchs Abraham, and later Jacob (28,22), are connected with this practice shows the extent to which the immigrating tribes had adopted Canaanite religious practices.

Gen. 14, 18-22 preserves these features of Canaanite religion taken over by the early Israelite tribes, and among these the concept of blessing

is specially important in that it is connected with the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives.

4. Gen. 15 - Confirmation of the promise by a covenant.

The source analysis of this chapter has been much debated.[96] It has been supposed by most scholars that the Elohist story of the patriarchs begins here but that nevertheless the bulk of the narrative belongs to the Yahwist. Noth considers chapter 15 to be an original introduction to the Abraham stories in G and, on the basis of Galling's proposal, suggests that הולך should be understood in a literal sense of migrating to a foreign country. Noth thinks that the words of the deity in 1b (E), parallel to 1b (J), belong to a very old tradition about the pre-Palestinian stage but that this was transferred to the promised land itself, as the first theophany to Abraham after his arrival in Canaan. E had adhered to the original tradition but his introduction has been sacrificed in joining his material with that of J.[97] Similarly, Lohfink argues that Gen. 15 originally belongs neither to the Elohist nor to the Yahwist. The land promise in this chapter is connected with the oracle of salvation and with prophetic and priestly elements, but it is originally a pledge of land to the patriarch which was taken over by the Yahwist and the Elohist into their accounts.[98]

Yahweh's announcement that he is Abraham's shield and that the latter's reward will be great, seems to suggest that God is about to make a most spectacular gift to him. But Abraham's complaint, even before hearing the promise, seems strange. The complaint in verse 2 derives logically from 13,17. God commands Abraham to 'go through' (קום התהלך) the land because he would 'give' (נתן) it to Abraham and his posterity. In 15, 2 Abraham complains 'O Yahweh what will you give (תתן) to me because I go (הולך) childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of

Damascus!'. Then Yahweh assures him that his own son will be his heir and takes him outside and shows him the stars. Thus, 15, 2 could directly follow after 13, 17 and 15, 1 could have been introduced either as a conclusion to chapter 14,[99] or in order to begin the section with an oracle of salvation, which would provide a command before the proclamation of a promise, a feature which is very common in the patriarchal promises.[100]

There is a great discussion about the location of this vision and covenant. Wellhausen suggests that Gen. 15, 7 was originally connected with 13,18 and that a mention of the place name was not considered to be necessary as it is already found in 13,18. The inclusion of ch. 14 and of 15, 1-6 has removed the place reference further back in the present text.[101] Kaiser thinks that the place name was dropped and that Gen. 15, 7-21 was secondarily connected with Shechem. He agrees with Kraetzschmar[102] in transferring Gen. 15, 7ff. to follow Gen. 12,7a, because Shechem is connected with a covenant-making tradition (Jos. 24). However, Kaiser thinks that the Abraham-Hebron tradition is primary and that the Shechem tradition had been secondarily developed.[103] Dus, on the other hand, argues that the Shechem tradition was originally connected with Jacob (33, 18-20) and that it was connected with Abraham only after he had been genealogically connected with Jacob and Isaac. The itinerary in 12, 6-8 is also, according to Dus, derived from the Jacob tradition (35, 2-4.7).[104] Lohfink, however, suggests that Gen. 15 was originally connected with Hebron, but that this connection was abandoned in order to connect the covenant tradition with Jerusalem. Originally Gen. 14 and 15 were associated with different localities - Gen. 14 with Jerusalem and Gen. 15 with Hebron. But when these two were connected, the reference to Hebron was dropped in Gen. 15,1, and 15,16 was made to refer to Jerusalem. Gen. 13,18 refers to Hebron and this must have been originally the

locality with which Gen. 15 was also connected. The reference to Hebron must have been dropped also in order to make Jerusalem the point to which the tribes of Israel were to come after the Exodus.[105] Nielsen attributes Gen. 15, 7ff., to the Mamre-Hebron traditions and 15, 1-6 to the Jerusalem cult traditions.[106] Noth connects the Abraham traditions originally with the Negeb and only secondarily with Hebron. As for Gen. 15, he follows Alt in locating it outside Palestine all together.[107] Alt sees in the absence of the place name in Gen. 15 a pointer to the early patriarchal religion of the 'gods of the fathers', in which the god was not localized in Canaan but was connected with the pre-Israelite tribes during their nomadic period. Clements rejects Alt's location of Gen. 15 outside Palestine on the grounds that a nomadic deity could not be thought of as granting land which did not belong to him.[108] Clements, in agreement with Eissfeldt, identifies the 'god of Abraham' with אל שדי and connects this deity with Mamre on the basis of the theophany to Abraham in Mamre (18, 16a J), of the tomb of Machpelah near Mamre (23 P) and of the association of the Abraham-Lot stories with Hebron which is near Mamre.[109] However, it may be pointed out that Alt is not altogether against localizing the 'gods of the fathers' in Canaan. He allows for this in 'the first Israelite stage', when the 'gods of the fathers' were located in the Canaanite cultic centres.[110] The proposal to connect 15, 2ff., with 13,17 would still locate the story by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron.[111]

V. 6 is a comment by the narrator[112] and v. 7, with הוציאתיך מאור כשדים, is from the P narrative and so could either be a later correction,[113] or an addition.[114] If vv. 6-7 are considered to be a later addition, then v. 8 follows directly upon vv.2-5 as a second complaint by Abraham. The first complaint is about the heir, and, when that is assured, a second complaint is made, 'By what will I know that I will possess it?'

Both land and posterity are mentioned in the promise in 13, 14-17 and both are assured in Gen. 15. The promise in Gen. 15, 13-16 is generally considered to be a secondary addition, but Snijders observes a literary connexion between this section and the preceding pericope in that the verb יָרַשׁ occurs in v. 8 and again in v. 13.[115]

In view of the above comments the chapter may be divided as follows : (i) Oracle of salvation, v.1; (ii) Abraham's complaint, vv. 2-3; (iii) The promise of a son v. 4; (iv) Heilsschilderung, v. 5; (v) Narrator's comment, v.6; (vi) Promise of land with self-introduction of Yahweh, v.7; (vii) Request for proof, v. 8; (viii) The covenant and the confirmation of the promise of land, vv. 9-21.

(i) Oracle of salvation (v.1)

> After these things, the word of Yahweh came to
> Abraham in the vision saying 'Fear not Abraham!
> I am your shield, your reward is very great.'

Dion points out the following characteristics common to the oracles of salvation in the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 15, 1 (E); 21, 17 (E); 26, 23-24 (J) 28, 13 LXX (J); 46, 1-4 (E)) :

(1) They are words in direct discourse spoken by God himself.

(2) The person is addressed in the second person singular.

(3) Each oracle contains the opening formula אַל תִּירָא .

(4) There is the announcement of a theme of confidence, 'I am with you' (26, 23; 28, 15; 15,1; 21, 17; 46, 4).

(5) The whole passage ends with a promise appropriate to the particular situation.

(6) The name of the person to whom it is addressed is mentioned.

(7) The divine manifestation begins with a formula of self-representation (Selbsvorstellungformel).

Dion rejects von Rad's view that the formula אַל תִּירָא derives from the

Holy War idea connected with the amphictyony of the twelve tribes,[116] because the patriarchal narratives represent peaceful theophanies, and the atmosphere in them is far removed from the clatter of battle. Dion favours Begrich's idea that the formula is derived from cultic oracles declared by the priest on behalf of the deity.[117] Dion thinks that this formula did not originally belong to the patriarchal traditions but that it was later imposed upon them, probably during the early centuries of the monarchical period. It was also imposed upon the ancient accounts of Holy War at the same time.[118] Dion suggests that this has been secondarily added to the patriarchal narratives, but he does not indicate the precise reason for its adoption. Except for 21,17, where Hagar is in great danger, the formula אל תירא does not presuppose any dire necessity in the other passages where it occurs. The other four contexts (15,1; 26, 23-24; 28, 13 (LXX); 46, 1-4) are connected with moving into new regions, Abraham moving to Canaan, Isaac to Beersheba, Jacob to the trans-Jordan area and later to Egypt. But the common feature in all five passages is the presence of promise. The other promise passages begin regularly with an imperative before the announcement of promise,[119] but it is the Heilsorakel formula which appears in these passages in place of the imperative preceding promise. In cases where the imperative is missing in the patriarchal promise passages, the narrators appear to have introduced the Heilsorakel formula to precede a promise and in this way to have connected promise with divine command.

היה דבר יהוה אל אברם : This expression is a technical term connected with prophetic revelation. The Elohist employs this term to represent the divine revelation to Abraham. Similarly in 20,7 the Elohist represents Abraham as a נביא. דבר has a double meaning 'word' and 'thing'. A word once uttered with intent is considered to have the effect

of making it into a reality. A word is thought of as having power which extends beyond the realm of mind and to be effective in the spatial and material world.[120] For example, Amaziah the priest of Bethel complains that the land is not able to contain the words of Amos (Amos 7,10), implying thereby a spatial connotation for the words of the prophet. A man's word spoken with intent is considered to have the power to bring about the intention of the speaker. In the same way, the word of God is considered to be effective in a far more powerful manner. In the patriarchal narratives דבר יהוה is a word of blessing and promise in contrast to the word of God in the books of the prophets, where the emphasis is on the judgement of God.[121] Mowinckel translates היה דבר יהוה as 'the word of Yahweh became active reality to so-and-so.'[122] Vriezen says that it is something concrete and living, something dynamic and creative.[123]

The word מחזה meaning 'vision' is otherwise used only in connection with the Mesopotamian seer Balaam (Num. 24, 4.16) and the false prophets in Ezekiel (Ezek. 13,7). Lohfink thinks that as this is followed by an oracle of salvation, it implies that the oracle was given through a mediator, a practice which is attested in the patriarchal narratives (25, 2f.).[124] On the other hand, Abraham is always depicted as receiving direct revelation from Yahweh in contrast to the other subsidiary figures who receive revelation through the mediation of a מלאך יהוה.[125] The Mesopotamian priestly group bāru are seers in the sense of being sacrificial inspectors. Bāru not only see the deity but also examine the livers of sacrificial animals, the flight of birds and oil in the cup in the course of giving divine oracles. Lindblom, on the other hand thinks that מחזה indicates a visual theophany bestowed upon a pious person while staying at a sanctuary.[126] In this passage מחזה points to a

visionary experience received by Abraham.

מגנך לך : Dahood suggests reading מגנך not from the usual root גנן 'to protect' but from מגן 'to give, to present', and translate, 'I shall be your benefactor, who will reward you greatly.'[127] Kessler also suggests reading מגנך , a participial form, on account of the emphatic form אנכי , which is commonly used with a participial form without the suffix.[128] Lohfink, on the other hand, argues for מגנך 'shield', a word which is attested by an oracle from the period of Asarhaddon, 'Asarhaddon in Arbela, I am (Ishtar) they gracious shield.'[129]

מאד expresses the superlative and is to be translated by 'exceedingly great'.[130] For הרבה , the Samaritan Pentateuch reads ארבה 'I will make your reward exceedingly great'.

The most natural order in an oracle is to have the prayer, entreaty or complaint first and then the oracle following upon the enquiry, but there the order is reversed, perhaps to indicate the free initiative of Yahweh in bestowing his promise and to emphasize that Yahweh's word is not determined or forced by human entreaty.[131]

(ii) Abraham's complaint (vv. 2-3)

> And Abraham thought,[132] 'O Lord Yahweh, what will you give me! for I go childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus'. And Abraham said, 'Behold you have given me no offspring and so[133] a son of my house will be my heir.'

ויאמר אברם , repeated in vv. 2a and 3a, has led commentators[134] to take them as parallels, but the difficulty could be avoided by taking v. 2 as a reflection of Abraham in his own mind in response to 13, 7, and v. 3 as a complaint addressed to Yahweh, NEB gets over the problem of this repetition by translating v. 3a as 'Abraham continued'.[135]

הוא דמשק אליעזר : Gunkel notes that the narrator does not consider Lot as the possible heir and comments that this possibility is perhaps not known to the narrator at all.[136] If the Lot tradition has been

secondarily added to the Abraham traditions, the tradition in Gen. 15 would point to a period before the Abraham traditions were brought into connection with Hebron where the Lot traditions were first associated with them.[137] But it may also be explained from the fact that since Lot has separated from Abraham not to return any more, he is not mentioned here. The complaint in this passage provides the tension or the need situation, which is led to its solution through a divine promise.[138]

(iii) The promise of a son (v. 4).

> And behold, the word of the Lord came to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir but your own son will be your heir.'

Here the promise of posterity is specified further. Abraham's own son will be his heir. The delay in the fulfilment of the promise has created a problem in the mind of the recipient of promise, but now it is reaffirmed in a more concrete manner than before. Here again, promise forms an arch connecting the tension of prolonged childlessness and the delayed fulfilment of promise. A reaffirmation of the promise releases this tension.

(iv) Portrayal of salvation (Heilsschilderung) (v.5).

> And he led him into the open air and said, 'Look up to the sky and count the stars if[139] you are able to count them'. And he said to him, 'Thus will your descendants be'.

The future increase of posterity is described in a graphic manner. The description of a future state of salvation is connected with the idea of blessing. The simple announcement of salvation is turned into a portrayal of a far more extensive change in the present state of affairs.[140]

(v) Narrator's comment : Faith reckoned as righteousness (v. 6).

> And he believed in Yahweh and he reckoned it[141]
> to him as righteousness.

There is a סוּמָכְיָה [142] in the Massoretic text between vv. 5 and 6 to indicate the beginning of a new paragraph, RSV, following most commentators,[143] includes it in the first paragraph, but NEB following the MT begins a new paragraph here. The tendency to join v. 6 to v. 5 is probably to avoid the apparent contradiction in v. 8 where Abraham seems to express doubts about the possession of the land, soon after the grand assertion about him in v. 6.

וְהֶאֱמִן בַּיהוָה : Hoftijzer points out that the Hiphil of אמן with ב often signifies 'to trust in Yahweh's might and power'. Here it emphasizes that Abraham is convinced that Yahweh is capable of fulfilling this extra-ordinary promise.[144]

וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה : Heidland observes that the primary aim of v. 6b is to express the personal relationship between Yahweh and Abraham and to emphasize the free will of Yahweh and the responsibility of Abraham. There is no idea of merit attributed to Abraham here.[145] Von Rad examines the use of חשב in the rest of the Old Testament and finds its origin in the cult. The word denotes a declaratory act by the priest on Yahweh's behalf and is very frequent in the book of Leviticus. חשב is originally connected with the declarations of a priest to the worshippers concerning the acceptance of a sacrifice, but it has been transferred by E from an original cultic context to the sphere of a free and wholly personal relationship between God and man. The cultic reckoning depended on something done by the worshipper such as sacrifice or some act of obedience. Here, hoeever, it is the whole-hearted acceptance of the promise of Yahweh, which brings Abraham into right relationship with Yahweh, so that he reckons

it to Abraham as righteousness. This spiritual 'reckoning' is not intended to be a polemic against cultic 'reckoning'. The Elohist places his emphasis upon the inward and personal attitude of the worshipper rather than upon the outward cultic act. He stresses the subjective attitude of Abraham to the promise in contrast to the objective reality of the sealing of the covenant narrated by the Yahwist.[146] Hoftijzer argues that in certain passages the verb חשב comes very near to the meaning 'to engage oneself with, to share, to regard' and rejects as exaggeration the emphasis of Heidland and von Rad upon the free will of Yahweh and the absence of the idea of merit in Yahweh's dealings with Abraham. Hoftijzer thinks that Abraham is rewarded by God with well-being, the promise of land and its confirmation by a covenant. Yahweh acts with Abraham as with a צדיק.[147] But it may be pointed out that the Massoretic text reads צדקה and not צדיק and that Hoftijzer's emphasis upon the idea of merit is contrary to the understanding of the land as the free gift of Yahweh, which he granted (נתן) to Israel.

(vi) Promise of land with self-introduction of Yahweh (v.7).

> And he said to him, 'I am Yahweh, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land as a possession.'

אנכי יהוה : This self-introduction of Yahweh indicates for Hoftijzer a method whereby the narrator wanted to underline the words of God, either in the preceding or in the following verses. It not only informs the reader that the 'I' who speaks is Yahweh, but also emphasizes the fact that Yahweh is especially interested in the theme already discussed or in the theme presently under discussion. In this passage it emphasizes 'land', about which Yahweh is especially interested.[148] Von Rad gives a different explanation namely that it presupposes the ancient belief that man's life was surrounded on all sides by divine powers which threatened his

existence. These were often believed to speak, and therefore God was thought of as voluntarily declaring his identity to avoid a possible confusion of the deity with these powers.[149] Von Rad's explanation indicates the origin of the expression within the context of early religious beliefs, whilst Hoftijzer's suggestion could indeed be valid for understanding a later literary usage of this expression. Rendtorff observes that the self-introductory formula of Yahweh is always associated with a recalling of past events as proof of Yahweh's power in his acts in history.[150] It is not an unknown God who suddenly reveals himself but the God who has been known through his works in the past. Here the original call is referred to as a proof of God's power and as the basis for the present promises.

The divine self-introductory formula also belongs to the form-material of the oracle of salvation.[151] Lohfink notes certain elements in this section which are connected with Israelite tradition. The divine self-introduction in 15,7 is similar to Yahweh's self-introduction at the beginning of the Decalogue Ex. 20,2 (= Deut. 5,6) : אנכי יהוה אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים , Gen. 15, 7 : אנכי יהוה אשר הוצאתיך מאור כשדים . Abraham's journey from Mesopotamia is not a deliverance from slavery[152] as is the journey referred to in the Decalogue, but both Ex. 20,2 and Gen. 15, 7 lead to the same end, that of receiving the land of Canaan as a possession. Elliger finds a close parallel between Gen. 15,7 and Lev. 25,38 :[153]

Lev. אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים לתת לכם את ארץ כנען

Gen. אני יהוה אשר הוצאתיך מאור כשדים לתת לך את הארץ הזאת לרשתה

Lohfink points out that a close connexion between the Exodus and the land of Canaan is preserved in the cult. A similar connexion is preserved in Gen. 15,7 between the Exodus of Abraham and the possession of the land of Canaan. Thus, there are two traditions of the promise of the land of

Canaan preserved in the tradition. The land-promise to the patriarch did not originally refer to the conquest under Joshua but pointed to an immediate settlement of the land in the generation following the patriarchs. This was later extended to include the tradition of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua.[154]

אור כשדים : The idea that Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees is found in P (Gen. 11, 30-31), and, therefore, von Rad considers the place-name in this passage to be a later correction. According to JE Haran is represented as the home of Abraham and his tribes (24, 4ff.; 29, 4).[155]

(vii) Abraham's request for proof (v.8)

> But he said, 'My Lord Yahweh, by what will
> I know that I possess it.'

Hoftijzer objects to the usual interpretation of this verse as an expression of Abraham's doubt,[156] and says that this is a request for proof or confirmation. He cites the instance of Gideon (Jud. 6, 36-40) and king Hezekiah (II Kings 20, 8-11) who asked for proofs which were readily provided by God. In the case of king Ahaz, the prophet Isaiah reproaches him for refusing to ask for a sign or confirmation (Is. 7, 10-14). These requests for confirmation are not perceived as offences at all. It may be added here that the form of Abraham's question, במה אדע ('by what will I know'), does not cast doubt upon the promise but expresses a desire for confirmation of this promise. In the following verses God proceeds to confirm the promise by making a covenant with Abraham.[157]

(viii) The covenant and the confirmation of the promise of land (vv. 9-21).

(a) Preparations for the covenant (vv. 9-11)

> And he said to him, 'Bring me a three year old calf, a three year old she-goat and a three year old ram, a turtle dove and a young pigeon.' He brought to him all these, and he halved them in the middle and set each piece opposite its corresponding piece, but the birds[158] he did not halve. Then birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abraham scared them away.

The animals enumerated, calf, she-goat, ram, turtle dove and young pigeon, all point to the practice of the sacrifice of domestic animals among the Israelites already settled in Canaan.[159] The dividing of the animals is connected with an oath-rite similar to the one referred to in Jer. 34, 18.

(b) The deep sleep and the divine revelation (vv. 12-16)

> And it came to pass, as the sun was going down, a deep sleep came over Abraham and behold a great fear[160] came upon him. And he said to Abraham, 'Know surely[161] that your descendants will be strangers in a land which is not theirs and will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years. And, moreover, the nation whom they will serve I will judge and after that they will go forth in great riches. And you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried in a good old age; and the fourth generation shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorites will not be ripe till then.'

תרדמה is a deep sleep in which all consciousness ceases and in which man enters into a kind of dream state. It is connected with the miraculous acts of God (Gen. 2, 21). Lohfink explains this passage as a narrative constructed in the form of an incubation dream. The revelation to Abraham is introduced by הנה which is characteristic of the dream-

Gattung. The revelation in an incubation dream-experience confirms the land promise granted to Abraham in v. 7.[162]

The panorama of Israelite history from the patriarchs to the settlement in Canaan is revealed to Abraham. Von Rad considers this to be an aetiology designed to clarify the riddle about the promise of land to Abraham, fulfilled only in the fourth generation. This section releases the tension of this delayed fulfilment of promise, with the solution that Yahweh had provided for it all. The delay in no way indicates a deficiency of God's power. Further, von Rad calls this section ' a cabinet piece of Old Testament theology of history.' He mentions four important points about the Old Testament theology of history in this passage : (a) The universal rule of Yahweh over the history of the world. He will punish the Egyptians and the Amorites for their sins. (b) Yahweh has allotted a time to the nations, when they will be brought under the judgement which is immanent in history. (c) Yahweh has a special plan for his people in the history of the world. (d) Abraham and Israel are informed about the mysterious thoughts of Yahweh with regard to history. Thereby history is seen not as a riddle but as something guided by Yahweh.[163] It may be added that here there is an early trace of a transition from promise to prophecy. Promise comes in to release a present tension or a situation of need, whilst prophecy is associated with the whole range of history. The idea of the punishment of the Egyptians and the Amorites for their sins and the conception of the delay of judgement till the ripening of their sins are ideas connected with prophetic teaching. The span between promise and fulfilment is set within a period of four generations, but there is no further complaint from Abraham, who seems to be satisfied that his posterity will possess the land of Canaan after him. Abraham asked, 'By what do I know that I shall possess it?', and God tells him that he will not possess it but that only his posterity will possess

it in the fourth generation. The strange aquiescence of Abraham may perhaps be explained by the Israelite belief that a person lived on in his children and in the successive generations of his people.[164] The possession of the land by Abraham's descendants is equivalent to the possession of the land by Abraham himself.

(c) <u>The covenant and the promise of the land (vv. 17-21)</u>.

> And it came to pass, as the sun went down and it became dark, behold, a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day Yahweh made a covenant[165] with Abraham saying, 'To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river,[166] the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.'

The symbols of divine revelation in verse 17, תנור עשן ולפיד אש 'a smoking oven and a flaming torch', are instruments which belong to the settled Israelites.[167] They are similar to those used for the production of smoke in the cult. The theophany tradition itself is connected in Israel with Sinai, which also includes the symbols of smoke and fire (Ex. 19, 18 עשן כי עלה , אש). Thus, Gen. 15, 17-18, with the symbols of theophany and the term כרת ברית , perhaps alludes to the Sinai covenant.[168] But there is a difference here from the Sinai revelation, in that, whereas the Sinai revelation and covenant are connected with the revelation of the legal will of Yahweh, the Gen. 15 revelation and covenant with Abraham has no connection with legal obligations.

כרת ברית itself probably refers to Yahweh's oath, since the act is similar to that indicated in Jer. 34, 18. On the basis of this observation, Lohfink argues that the covenant in 15, 18 is the promise of

land given as an oath. He points out that the covenant act itself had taken place earlier and that verse 18 is introduced as the speech of God with the word לאמר and thus represents an oath, not a covenant. The expression כרת ברית in verse 18 is a declaration about a one-sided oath of God before Abraham, by which God gave his worshipper renewed assurance regarding the land-promise which he had already given to him. This is confirmed by the references to this promise in 24,7 and 26,3 where it is said that Yahweh swore to Abraham about the granting of the land of Canaan. In contrast to this, the land-promise in Ex. 34, 10f., is connected with command and with the demand of obligations, elements which are altogether absent in the land-oath given to Abraham. Further, Lohfink points out that even the land-promise in the Sinai covenant is referred to as an oath in the Deuteronomic text in Ex. 13, 11

והיה כי־יבאך יהוה אל־ארץ הכנעני כאשר נשבע לך ולאבתיך ונתנה לי .

Lohfink suggests that there is reference here to two traditions about the land-promise. The Sinai land-promise is connected with Yahweh's oath and Israel's obligations, whereas the Abrahamic covenant is connected only with Yahweh's oath. In Jos. 24, on the other hand, there is no reference to Yahweh's oath but only to Israel's obligations. This, Lohfink, says, is due to the fact that Yahweh's oath is fulfilled with Israel's entry into Canaan and that, therefore, Israel's obligations receive importance as conditions for their continued possession of the land.[169] Lohfink's distinction between the Sinai land-promise connected with legal obligations and the Abrahamic-land-promise connected with no such obligations, perhaps points to the cultural contexts within which these two traditions has developed. The Sinai traditions, connected with the tradition of slavery in Egypt, interprets Israel's relationship to God in terms of legal obligations to which they were accustomed under Egyptian rule. But the

Abrahamic patriarchal tradition, deriving from a nomadic background contains no such legal obligations because nomadic religion involved the idea of God associated with a people without any legal obligations.

The boundaries of the land of promise correspond to the extent of Solomon's kingdom (I Kings 5,1 (Evv. 4,21)). It is suggested that the text should read נחל מצרים (pro נהר מצרים) 'to the torrent of Egypt', that is the wadi el Arish on the south-western border of Israel (cf. Num. 34, 5; Jos. 15, 4.47; IK. 8, 65).[170] These boundaries imply an ideal which was never attained by Israel.

Snijders observes that, out of the ten peoples mentioned here, the first three (the Kenites, the Kenizzites and the Kadmonites) are unique in that they do not appear in any other lists, and he suggests that these three belonged to the earliest stage of the traditiom of the Abrahamic covenant.[171] Clements observes further that at least two of the three names are particularly linked with the south of Canaan. The Kenizzites were connected with Hebron and the Kenites were active in the south. Clements suggests that the reference 'the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites and the Kadmonites' was the original tradition, which was later enlarged to include the other peoples who were part of the Davidic empire.[172]

Covenant contains an idea of future relationship. Here the concept of promise is extended by its association with the covenant to indicate a future relationship between Yahweh and Abraham and, later, between Yahweh and Israel. The covenant is instituted in order to release the tension caused by the delay in the fulfilment of the promise. The whole chapter focusses attention upon the recipient of promise. His hopes and his fears create the tension, but, instead of despairing, he turns to God for an answer. God himself is in no way offended at these questions or at

the demand for confirmation, but condescends to enter into a covenant relationship without imposing any obligations on the recipient of promise. The chapter concludes abruptly without mentioning the reaction of Abraham, whether he was satisfied by the proof offered by God or not.[173] Abraham seems to have accepted the fact that the land promise would be fulfilled to him only in his posterity. But as for the promise of the heir, it is to be his own son (lit. 'the son of his body'). Strangely enough, the promise in v. 4 does not specify that the heir would be born through Sarah, a fact which is mentioned later in 17, 19. The author thereby seems to imply that this was the reason why Abraham and Sarah now set about making sure of an heir through Hagar (ch. 16). Here an interesting point may be noted, that even though God promises and later confirms his promise, he does not force himself upon the recipient of promise so as to undermine his freedom. Abraham is left to himself, to decide either to accept or to reject God's promise, or even to make his own interpretation of it. Sarah is not mentioned in this chapter, but it is she who takes the initiative in the next chapter in obtaining a son through Hagar. Sarah's words, 'Yahweh has prevented me from bearing children' (16, 2) and Abraham's assent to obtaining an heir through Hagar, perhaps point to a misunderstanding or even misinterpretation of the promise given in ch. 15.

5. Gen. 17 - The change of names and a further confirmation of promise through circumcision.

This chapter has been generally attributed to the Priestly document. Wellhausen assigns it to P without any reservations.[174] Skinner finds the authorship of P in every line of the chapter.[175] Gunkel attributes the whole chapter to P and considers וזרעך to be the readactor's insertion in order to make the chapter even with chapters 16 and 18 which are Yahwistic.[176] Procksch assigns it to P and yet notes the contrary views of Steuernagel and Dahle.[177] Steuernagel is the first to show the

great complexity of the literary problems in this chapter. He identifies four main strands : (A) 1-6. 9. 10aα and b. 11a. 15. 16b. 22. 23aα and b. 24-26; (B) 7-8. 11b. 13b. 14. 16a. 17-21; (C) 12a; (D) 10aβ . 12b. 13a. 23aβ . 27.[178] Von Rad assigns the chapter to P but says that it does not have a unified structure and continuity. He recognises a series of seams from which he concludes that various traditions about God's covenant with Abraham were combined to form a larger unit.[179] In Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, von Rad works out a detailed analysis of the whole of the Priestly document and divides this chapter into two priestly sources : (A) verses 15-22 and (B) verses 1-8. 9-14. 23-27. He finds unevenness in section B.[180] Noth assigns the chapter to P and considers the covenant sign of circumcision to have originated within the circle of the Exiles in Babylon, when it became important as a sign of differentiation. But as for the origin of the rite, he is not very definite and says that the question whether the aetiology of circumcision was first thought of by P or whether it was already a current concept, should remain open. He thinks that it might even go back to the oral tradition itself.[181] Hoftijzer, on the other hand, argues for an organic unity of the chapter against Steuernagel and von Rad. Hoftijzer endeavours to establish the unity of the chapter as it is the basic chapter for one of his sources, namely the El-Shaddai group. Although Hoftijzer musters many arguments, his position does not satisfactorily account for the existence of repetitions in this chapter.[182]

The chapter fits in very well in the present sequence after chapters 15 and 16. In chapter 15 God makes a covenant with Abraham in response to the latter's request for confirmation of the promise. But, as a result of a misunderstanding,[183] Abraham and Sarah now attempt to make sure of the heir of promise through Hagar (Gen. 16). In chapter 17 God renews the names of the recipients of promise and reaffirms his

promise in a more concrete manner than before. The heir is to be born through Sarah, he should be named Isaac and this would take place 'at this time next year'. The final redactor has arranged his materials very skilfully. The chapter may be divided into three main sections : (i) God's renewal of Abraham in relation to the covenant, vv. 1-8; (ii) The sign of the covenant and the first circumcision, vv. 9-14. 23-27; (iii) God's renewal of Sarah, vv. 15-22.

(i) <u>God's renewal of Abraham in relation to the covenant (vv. 1-8)</u>.

(a) Warning and repentence (vv. 1-3a)

> When Abraham was ninety nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abraham and said, to him, 'I am El Shaddai, walk before me and be blameless[184] that[185] I may set[186] my covenant between me and you and multiply you exceedingly.' Then Abraham fell on his face.

This has been interpreted as P's version of God making his covenant with Abraham[187], but it is interesting to note that there is no detailed representation of the covenant ceremony as in Gen. 15. It is presented in an altogether new way as a renewal of Abraham and Sarah through the change of their names. The words בריתי אתך would suggest that the covenant is available to Abraham if he would only stand by it. In chapter 16 Abraham and Sarah have disregarded the covenant through their attempt to have the heir of promise through Hagar. Here in chapter 17 God warns Abraham and renews both Abraham and Sarah, reaffirms his promises and renews the covenant. The divine self-introductory formula אני אל-שדי should perhaps be understood as a warning to Abraham

that he should reckon with the risks involved in disregarding the covenant of God, who has the power to deal violently with those who deal lightly with his covenant. The imperatives that follow, together with their moral undertones, support such an interpretation of this passage. Abraham's silent prostration may be an indication of his deep regret. It has often been commented that Abraham does not speak at all here,[188] and it seems very strange, especially after Gen. 15 where he is the main speaker. The change of the names of the couple may indicate that this is a renewal of their nature so that they would spontaneously abide by the covenant. P emphasizes the transformation of human nature in the Abrahamic covenant.[189] The traditional translation and interpretation have seen it differently, in the light of the later image of Abraham as a pious obedient man. But the patriarchal narratives depict the inner tensions which he had to face as a result of the delay of promise. Von Rad points out how the question of guilt is complicated in chapter 16,[190] and this is obviously due to the work of a later pious redactor. The sign of circumcision in this chapter may also point to a transformation of Abraham.

The story in this chapter is not associated with a place in Palestine. The divine name אל שדי is not connected with a place in other passages.[191] Gunkel thinks that originally the name must have been connected with some locality.[192] Alt says that the place-connexion of El Shaddai has been completely lost.[193] Eissfeldt suggests that El Shaddai is the god of Hebron.[194] Clements also considers El Shaddai to be the El deity of Mamre, which is near Hebron.[195] Rost, on the other hand, points out that אל שדי is a new name coined by P, by which he avoids the connexion of the name of God with a human being (which is the main characteristic of the religion of the 'gods of the fathers') and also the association of El with a particular place (which is the most important feature of

Canaanite-El-religion), both of which were offensive to his idea of the transcendence of Yahweh expressed by the term כבוד יהוה.[196] Thus P perhaps deliberately avoided any place name in connexion with El Shaddai.

Several interpretations of the name אל שדי have been put forward, but, as von Rad remarks, the meaning of the name has not yet been satisfactorily explained.[197] The Septuagint translates it in Genesis and Exodus by ὁ θεός σου (μου , αὐτῶν). In other places it represents שדי by θεός (Num. 24, 16; Is. 13, 6); κύριος (9 times in Job); παντοκράτωρ (14 times in Job); κύριος παντοκράτωρ (twice in Job); ὁ τὰ πάντα ποιήσας (Job. 8, 3); ὁ ἐπουράνιος (Ps. 68, 15); ὁ θεός τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Ps. 91,1). Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotian render it by ἱκανός.[198] It has been suggested that the Assyrian word šadû, 'mountain', may indicate that El Shaddai is the mountain god.[199] Weippert derives it from שְׂדֵה in the sense of the 'El of the meadow' (El der Flur). He explains the doubling of the ד as being analogous with names like חנן and the change of שׂ to שׁ as a dialectical variation frequent in related languages, similar to שִׁבֹּלֶת and סִבֹּלֶת in Jud. 12, 6.[200] The Hebrew verb שדד means 'to overpower, to treat with violence, to devastate'. Davidson remarks that אל שדי means 'not the Almighty' but 'the destroyer', signifying presumably the storm god or possibly the scorching sun--god or the one who lays waste.[201] In Gen. 28, 3 Isaac blesses Jacob by invoking אל שדי and in Ruth 1, 20.21 Naomi complains that שדי had brought disaster upon her, which suggest that the deity El Shaddai was associated both with disaster and with blessing. This may refer to the power of God to bless and to inflict punishment and disaster. This meaning would be appropriate in 17, 1, where God asks Abraham to be mindful of his power and to conduct himself in such a way as to receive blessing and not disaster. The versions point to this meaning of El

Shaddai. It is possible that this was an epithet of God, similar to אל קנא and pointing to God's great might and power.

(b) Renewal of Abraham - change of name (vv. 3b-6)

> And God spoke with him saying, 'As for me,[202]
> behold my covenant is with you and you shall
> be the father of a multitude of nations.
> No longer shall your name be Abram, but your
> name shall be Abraham; for I have made you
> the father of a multitude of nations. I
> will make you exceedingly fruitful and I
> will make nations of you and kings shall
> come forth from you.'

אני הנה ('As for me behold') : This construction with a personal pronoun as the principal subject brings out a very interesting point in this context. God has reproached Abraham for disregarding the covenant relationship and asks him to fulfil his part by walking before him and being blameless. Then he takes up the other side of the covenant, his own responsibility to fulfil the covenant promises and assures Abraham that he is prepared to do his part.

אברהם Gunkel says that although, according to modern philologists, it is not possible to derive the etymology of אברהם form אב־המון , nevertheless, it does not mean that P had no etymology at all and that it is a mere word-play here. Gunkel points out that P found the two names אברם and אברהם in the tradition and joined them together by placing the former before the covenant and the latter after the covenant. The Sarai's name was changed in accordance with it.[203] Procksch thinks that J had אברהם in J* as in E, and that the special narrative J^a had אברם and later when J, E and P were combined, J* was changed to אברם till 17,5. On the basis of a reference to 'the field of brm' in Hebron in Sheshonk's inscriptions, Procksch suggests that אברם is perhaps a

Hebronic or Judean variant.[204] Von Rad thinks that the change of name in this chapter is secondary as it is in 35, 9-11, where Jacob's name is changed to Israel. He observes further that it is not P's style to concern itself with an etymology of names.[205] Hoftijzer rejects von Rad's position and says that as the promise of land and posterity are connected with the change of name in the El-Shaddai group, the change of name in this passage need not be a later extension.[206] Granted that P is not interested in etymology, it is still strange that he should have emphasized this motif of the change of name in the Abraham, Sarah and the Jacob stories and also in the account of the change of God's name in Ex. 6,3. The fact that he found it in the tradition does not seem to be an adequate explanation, because P is not a mere collector but a profound theologian. There must be some compelling reason for P to employ this motif so often. It perhaps lies in his great interest in theology. The priestly writer intends to convey the idea that covenant implies a renewal of human nature, a concept which he expresses through the giving of a new name, which, in turn, was understood as representing a change in the character and destiny of a person.[207] Here Abraham is changed so that he may be able to abide by the covenant and not wander astray from the path of promise. This change of name becomes the point at which the promise is enlarged so as to include nations and kings amongst the posterity of Abraham. The formation of the Israelite state and the institution of the monarchy are seen to be a fulfilment of the promise made to the patriarchs. This is repeated again in the blessings of Sarah and Jacob (Gen. 17, 16; 28,3; 35,11). P considers the monarchy to be in accordance with the will of God,[208] whereas the Deuteronomist has a different estimation, that it is contrary to the will of God (I.Sam. 8).

(c) Reassurance about the fulfilment of the covenant with an extension of promise (vv. 7-8)

> 'I will fulfil my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.'

הקימתי את־בריתי 'I will fulfil my covenant' (NEB) is a better rendering than the usual 'I will establish' (RSV), which would imply that the covenant is not yet complete and that it will be established in the future. The Hiph'il of קום may also be translated as 'to carry out, to give effect to.'[209]

ברית עולם : Clements thinks that this expression was probably introduced into Gen. 17 from the tradition of the royal covenant of the Davidic monarchy.[210]

ארץ מגוריך : Von Rad points out that by this term the Priestly writer defines the theologically curious, broken relationship of the patriarchs to the saving gift of the land. The land was promised to them but they did not possess it.[211] A similar distinction is made by J in 12,1 in the words 'the land which I will show you,' and perhaps also in the regular reference to the descendants of Abraham in the land-promise to Abraham. Hoftijzer distinguishes two shades of meaning for גור (a) 'to stay, to tarry', and (b) 'to stay in a socially dependant position as a גר'. Abraham not only forsook his native land but also had to live as a dependent גר and had to buy a grave for his wife (Gen. 23). The promise of land is the promise to grant land to the one who has no native land of his own. It does not refer to the possession of a piece of

land, for, according to Hoftijzer, even גֵּר could possess a piece of land. Hoftijzer thinks that the emphasis here is upon a native land, the property of a group or race, where one stays without being obliged to live in a dependent position. The term מְגוּרִים does not refer to the sojourning of the patriarchs but to their dependent position in the land, in contrast to later Israel who possessed it as their native land.[212]

Von Rad considers v. 7a to be a repetition of v. 2a,[213] but it need not be if v. 7a is taken as a reaffirmation of the covenant after the renewal of Abraham. In v. 2a God, as it were, pleads with Abraham that he may be allowed to perform his part of the covenant, whereas in v. 7a God assures its fulfilment.[214] Moreover, v. 7a is followed by a further promise that he would be God to Abraham and his posterity.

Zimmerli draws attention to the importance given by P to the Abrahamic covenant as opposed to the Sinai covenant, although P emphasizes the Sinai legislation as the only basis for the legitimate cult in Israel. Zimmerli suggests that this shift in emphasis from the Sinai covenant to the Abrahamic covenant was due to the fact that the latter was more of a covenant of grace than the Sinai covenant. In this way P wanted to emphasize that even after the disaster of the Exile, which was the result of Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant, Yahweh's grace was not exhausted. For this reason P was more emphatic about the 'grace' aspect of the Abrahamic covenant.[215] But Hempel objects to this conclusion and points out that the Sinai covenant is not conditional as suggested by Zimmerli and, moreover, that the stipulations about circumcision connected with the Abrahamic covenant are not very different from the cultic regulations associated with the Sinaitic covenant. Hempel, on the other hand, suggests that P is rooted in early pre-exilic Hebron traditions and his emphasis on the Abrahamic covenant is polemical and is directed against an over-estimation of the Sinai covenant in Jerusalem.[216]

Vink does not approve of Hempel's explanation and asks whether there is such an emphasis on the Sinaitic covenant in Jerusalem as alleged by Hempel and says that if the priestly writers had found a lack of 'grace' in the Sinai covenant they would have introduced it. The legislative character of the Sinai covenant itself is largely due to the work of the priestly writers. Vink suggests that the importance given to the Abrahamic covenant was occasioned by the ethnic character of the patriarch. Through the Abrahamic covenant, salvation is not limited to one nation but is extended to include other nations in the near East. This was of great importance to the Jews who had spread over a wide area during the Exilic period.[217] But the rite of circumcision connected with the Abrahamic covenant also sets a limitation to this broad view which Vink attributes to it. It may, rather, be suggested that it was the idea of the transformation of the patriarch which led P to emphasize the Abrahamic covenant. The idea that covenant involved transformation, an idea which was current during the Exilic period,[218] could be developed by P in the Abrahamic covenant to a greater extent than in the Sinai covenant. P does not speak of a new covenant like Jeremiah (31, 31ff.), nor does he speak of a new heart of flesh like Ezekiel (36, 25ff.), but he emphasizes the same concept through the change of name, which represents a change in a person's character. He understands covenant to involve a change of a man's nature so that he would spontaneously live in a covenant relationship with God. The cultless character of the covenant in Gen. 17 points to the Exilic period, when there was emphasis upon the inner transformation of man.

(ii) <u>The sign of the covenant and the first circumcision (vv. 9-14. 23-27)</u>

(a) The regulations concerning circumcision (vv. 9-14).

> And God said to Abraham, 'As for you,[219] you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is the sign[220] of my covenant, which you shall keep (pl.) between me and you (pl.) and your descendants after you : Circumcise every male among you (pl.). And you shall circumcise the flesh of your (pl.) foreskins, and this[221] shall serve as[222] a covenant sign between me and you (pl.). He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male throughout your (pl.) generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. But he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money must be circumcised; thus shall my covenant be in your flesh as a sign[223] of an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who is not circumcised in his foreskin, shall be cut off from his people; he has disregarded[224] my covenant.'

Now the keeping of the covenant is given as a law, In chapter 15 it was given without any obligation[225] on the part of Abraham, but here it is a charge upon Abraham and his descendants. Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant which Abraham and his posterity are commanded to observe. Von Rad says that here an attitude is demanded of Abraham towards the act of God, which is externally expressed in circumcision.[226]

On the basis of Ex. 4, 25ff., Wellhausen explains circumcision of male infants as a substitute for an original practice of circumcision of young men before marriage. He suggests that Gen. 34 probably points to this early practice in Israel.[227] Gunkel, on the other hand, points out that circumcision was a puberty rite and that it signified the admission of a young man into the cultic society of a people.[228]

Long makes the important observation that the formula הי"ה לאות is used in P as a significative aetiology to designate a specific object or cultic rite as a permanent sign. Here the common practice of circumcision is taken and interpreted as a sign of relationship with God. He observes further that the formula is never given in narrative form but is always found in the form of a speech, as an epilogue or as secondary material added to an older narrative.[229]

A constant variation between the singular and the plural numbers in this section may probably be explained as the result of a later extension of the original text, so as to include the subsequent generations of Abraham's descendants. Abraham is seen as the representative of Israel receiving the sign of the covenant from God.

(b) The first circumcision (vv. 23-27)

Abraham obeys the command of God and circumcises himself and all the male members of his house. Von Rad rejects Steuernagel's suggestion that vv. 23ff., could not have known v. 12a and says that what we have in vv. 9-12a is the circumcision-Torah for Israel in general which does not take into account the special circumstances of Abraham and Ishmael. Von Rad thinks that the report about circumcision directly followed the law of circumcision but that it has now been separated by a later revision.[230] The mention of Ishmael's age (thirteen years) may indirectly emphasize the fact that Ishmael was not circumcised on the eighth day as Isaac was later and therefore has not fulfilled the law of circumcision,[231] which alone guarantees the covenant promises. Thus in v. 20 Ishmael is given the promise of blessing and posterity, but the actual fulfilment of the covenant is promised to Isaac.

(iii) <u>God's renewal of Sarah (vv. 15-22)</u>

(a) Change of name (vv. 15-17)

> And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarah your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, for her name will be Sarah. For I will bless her, and I will also give you a son by her, and I will bless her and she will become[232] nations, kings of peoples shall come forth from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and thought, 'Can a son be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah who is ninety years old bear a child?'

Sarah comes into the picture for the first time in connection with promises. She is not mentioned in connection with the promises in chs. 12, 13 and 15. This may perhaps be the reason for her initiative in chapter 16, whereby she shows her distrust of the divine promises and even disregarded the covenant through her intelligent scheming. Sarah, along with Abraham, has strayed from the path of promise, and therefore the author now devotes a separate section in which she is given a new name and a blessing. The promise now includes Sarah as the mother of Abraham's heir. This section is almost parallel to that concerning Abraham in vv. 1-8[233] and serves to indicate that Sarah is equally in need of God's renewal. The main difference between the two passages is that Sarah receives a blessing as well, whereas Abraham does not, since he had already received one in 12, 1-3. Blessing is connected with fertility, which Sarah needs for bearing a child.[234] Now the promise is much more concrete than in chapter 15. A son will be born to Abraham through Sarah within a year, and his name is to be Isaac.

(b) Ishmael and Isaac (vv. 18-22)

> And Abraham said to God, 'Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!' And God said, 'No, Sarah your wife shall bear a son for you and you shall call him Isaac. I will fulfil my covenant with him as an

everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you, behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly. He shall be father of twelve princes and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant, I will fulfil with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear at this season next year. When he finished talking with him God went up from Abraham.

Von Rad discusses the relationship between vv. 15-22, which he designates as A, and vv. 1-8, which he designates as B, and concludes that section B is, from the literary point of view, later than A, since it is heavily overloaded with theological reflections. He observes that section A has similarities with chapter 18 while section B has similarities with chapter 15.[235] McEvenue notes that P has made three major changes in vv. 15-22 in respect of Gen. 18 : (a) P makes Abraham react to God's promises and not Sarah, as is the case in Gen. 18; (b) P inserts the blessing of Ishmael and thus synthesizes the complaint in 15, 2-3, the objection in 18,11-12 and the accounts of Ishmael in 16, 7-12 and 21,17-21; (c) P inserts the בְּרִית -concept into the story (vv. 19b. 21a), a concept which is not found in Gen. 18.[236] Thus P, while using older material, makes important changes in his account of Abraham in Gen. 17. P employs all the main features connected with promise in the J and E narratives. The divine self-introductory formula אֵל־שַׁדָּי אֲנִי (17,1) connected with Heilsorakel in E (15,1), the imperative הִתְהַלֵּךְ (v.1), the promise (vv. 4-9), the blessing (b. 16, Sarah and verse 20, Ishmael) and the obedient response of the patriarch (vv. 23-27). These characteristics are spread over the whole chapter, whereas in J and E they remain close together.

6. Gen. 18, 9-15. 17-19 - The status of the recipient of promise.

The narrative in chapters 18 and 19 is a Yahwistic account. Wellhausen considers 18, 17-19. 22b-23a to be an editorial insertion, which reflects the theological ideas of the time of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the book of Job.[237] Gunkel assigns vv. 1-16 to J and considers vv. 17-19 to be a later insertion designed to increase the honour of the patriarch.[238] Von Rad also ascribes vv. 17-19, which he terms a theological section, to the Yahwist.[239] Noth finds only v. 19 to a later insertion.[240] Westermann calls the section comprising vv. 17-33, 'a theological narrative.' He observes that such theological passages are found only in the Abraham cycle (Gen. 12, 1-3; 15, 1-6; 18, 17-33; 22, 1-19).[241]

The main problem of the chapter is that of the three men of whom one is represented as Yahweh. Gunkel thinks that the narrative originally belonged to the pre-Yahwistic period and that at that stage the three men were not messengers of Yahweh but three gods. Later, the saga was incorporated into the Israelite tradition, at which stage the singular was introduced into the story in order to identify Yahweh amongst, them, and was subsequently localized in Hebron.[242] Alt traces three stages of tradition in this story. The first is the pre-Israelite stage which had the story of the three divine beings who revealed themselves in the sacred grove. The second is the first Israelite stage, when the God of Abraham was introduced into this tradition and when Abraham becomes the first to receive their revelation. The third stage is the second Israelite stage, in which Yahweh emerges as the one and only God among the trinity of divine beings.[243] Von Rad suggests that the Israelites received this narrative from the older inhabitants of Canaan, later attributed it to Abraham and subsequently admitted it into the Yahweh religion.[244]

Widengren points out three characteristics of a birth oracle in this passage which are also typical of the birth oracles in the Ras Shamra texts : (a) communication concerning the conception of the child, (b) command concerning the child's name, and (c) prediction of the coming deeds of the child. The literary category of the oracle about Isaac's birth goes back to a Canaanite pattern. Similar oracles are given to Danel and Keret in the Ugaritic literature.[245]

The story begins with the entertainment of the three visitors by Abraham. There is a constant variation between the plural and the singular in order to indicate that one of the men is Yahweh and thereby to monotheize an ancient Canaanite story about three gods. However, the attempt is not a complete success because there are still traces of a polytheistic background.

After the feast the promise is announced. This is set within the context of a blessing, where the one who blesses is entertained with a sumptuous meal, after which he blesses the host. The classic example for such a meal before blessing is the story of the blessing of Jacob and Esau by Isaac. Gunkel draws attention to a similar story in the book of Kings, the story of Elisha and the Shunamite woman (II Kings 4, 8-17). The promise passage, vv. 9-15, is complicated by the fact that this promise has already been given in chapter 17 by P. The redactor still retains it, although it seems to be a repetition, but he perhaps justified its retention by interpreting it as a promise given to Sarah. In chapter 17 the whole story is related to Abraham. Even though God gives Sarah a new name and a special blessing, Sarah herself does not meet God or hear the promise. Now God speaks in Sarah's hearing, so that she may not again lead Abraham astray from the way of promise. Except for the words connected with entertainment, Abraham remains silent throughout this section. The author concentrates on Sarah and the words אי֫ן שׂרה אשׁתך

perhaps indicate the intention of the author in introducing this promise, although it appears to be a repetition of the promise in chapter 17. Sarah is the important character of this narrative. Here a special revelation is granted to her as the ancestress of the people of Israel. The story is connected with the fertility of a childless mother, which is the main characteristic of blessing.

(a) God's promise to Sarah (vv. 9-15)

> And they said to him, 'Where is Sarah your wife?' And he said, 'There in the tent'. Then he said, 'I will surely return to you at this time next year[246] and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son'. And Sarah was listening at the tent door and she was behind it.[247] Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing.[248] So Sarah laughed to herself and said, 'After I am worn out and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' Then Yahweh said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh saying, "Shall I indeed bear a child now that I am old?" Is there anything impossible[249] for Yahweh? At the appointed time I will return to you in a year's time and Sarah will have a son.' But Sarah denied saying, 'I did not laugh', because she was afraid, but he said, 'No, but[250] you did laugh.'

The conversation with Sarah centres around the word צחק ,[251] pointing to the name Isaac, which is already mentioned in 17, 19 but which is perhaps derived from this section.[252] Abraham is said to have laughed in 17, 17, but here it is Sarah who laughs at the promise. In 21,6 (twice) Sarah remembers how Yahweh had made her laugh and expresses her embarrassment at those who laughed at her, and in v. 9 Ishmael is said to have

'made fun of' (פִּצְחֵק) Isaac, an attitude which brings about his expulsion. There is a further allusion to the word in 26,8 where Isaac is reported to have 'made love to' (פִּצְחֵק) Rebekah. The expression il yshq 'El laughs' is found in the Ugaritic literature. Ginsberg suggests that the theophorus name which the Biblical hypcoristicon יִצְחָק presupposes, could only have been inspired by Canaanite theology.[253] Widengren also suggests that the root צחק has special sexual implications and that it belongs to Canaanite religion.[254] Hvidberg also thinks that צחק indicates an erotic element and that it belongs to Canaanite religion.[255] All these point to the conclusion that the saga was perhaps originally a Canaanite legend which was later incorporated into the Yahweh religion. Von Rad points out that the name was no doubt originally יִצְחַק אֵל like יִצְחַק־אֵל meaning 'may the divinity smile (on the child)', but that in course of time the צחק element in the name became the dominant motif of the story and was developed far beyond the original sense which it had in the name.[256] This would have happened at a time when the original traditions became dissociated from the cult and were later enlarged to suit a more secular audience, or it may be that the names were no longer understood in their original meaning. This view still allows for a Canaanite origin of the story.

(b) Yahweh's monologue (vv. 17-19)

> And Yahweh thought, 'Shall I hide from Abraham[257] what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth will procure blessing for themselves in him? For I have chosen him that he may command his household after him so that they keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice in order that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which he has promised to him.'

Abraham, renewed and reinstated, is given an honoured status in the sight of God. He is given the privilege of entertaining the divine guests, and now the divine purpose is revealed to him. He has this intimate relationship with Yahweh because he will be a great and mighty nation and all the families of the earth will procure blessing for themselves through him. This is not something which Abraham will achieve for himself but is what Yahweh has willed to grant to him. Von Rad says that this section is filled with theological formulations which are quite foreign to the old narrators.[258] It contains ideas similar to those in Amos. Yahweh makes known his will to his servants the prophets (Amos 3, 7),[259] Yahweh had known Israel alone amongst all the familites of the earth (Amos 3,2) and Yahweh demands righteousness and justice (Amos 5,24). The purpose of Yahweh's call is enlarged here from the one mentioned in 12, 1-3, where Yahweh called Abraham so that Abraham might be a blessing and that all the families of the earth might procure blessing for themselves in him. Here a new role is given to Abraham, namely that he should be the mediator of Yahweh's law to his descendants. The only law that has been given to Abraham and his descendants so far is that of circumcision (Gen. 17, 9-14), but here laws pertaining to moral conduct are implied in the words 'to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice.' This certainly reflects the teaching of the prophets, who proclaimed Israel's moral obligations in opposition to the cultic and ceremonial extravagances of the day. But Westermann thinks that this passage is certainly older than the prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries since it contains motifs similar to those presented in the story of the primeval Flood (Gen. 6-9), where God warns his people before they are threatened by danger. Here a new motif is added, namely, the 'intercession' of Abraham, one which is found elsewhere in the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 20,7 Abraham interceding for Abimelech; 25,21 Isaac praying for

his wife Rebekah). Westermann says that here the declaration of a sentence and intercession are expanded into a theological narrative.[260] However, a difference may be noted here between this passage and the Flood story in that Abraham is in no way threatened by danger as Noah was, and Abraham pleads for the people of Sodom whereas there is no intercession for the peoples in the story of Noah.

יְדַעְתִּיו כִּי : יָדַע here means not itellectual knowledge, nor even the knowledge of the special qualification of Abraham but describes the 'election' or choosing of Abraham by Yahweh. Botterwßck argues for the meaning 'to choose', against Quell who understands it to mean 'to care'[261] Bultmann also suggests that יָדַע means 'to elect' in 18, 19; Ex. 33, 12; Amos 3,2; Hos. 13,5 and Jer. 1,5.[262] Similarly, Gunkel translates יָדַע as 'to choose'.[263] Baumann points out that in the Yahwist יָדַע signifies 'to choose' or 'to elect' with emphasis on Yahweh having a close relationship with someone (Gen. 18, 19; Ex. 33, 12-17).[264]

This section refers to the promise, but there is no specific mention of land. Hoftijzer argues that even though there is no mention of the land-promise in this passage, it is implied in the declaration that Israel will become a great and mighty nation. The expression גּוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם points to the imminent power of Israel. The blessing that people will receive at the hands of Abraham and his descendants indicates the future might of Israel. Here the supreme position which Israel would gain over other nations presupposes the possession of land, which alone is the guarantee for the existence of a people. Hoftijzer illustrates this from the story of the daughters of Zelophehad (Num. 27, 1ff.). The daughters of Zelophehad wish to perpetrate the family of their deceased father and for this they request a special land-holding. The possession of a special inalienable territory is the basic condition for the existence and continuance of a people.[265] A possible explanation for this omission

of the land-promise may perhaps be found in Gen. 15 where it is clearly stated that Abraham will not possess the land but that only his posterity would possess it in the fourth generation. Therefore, the narrator here seems to be deliberately avoiding any definite reference to the land-promise since it does not immediately concern Abraham. He only alludes to it indirectly in the words 'in order that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which he has promised to him.' The land promise is the promise par excellence among the things which God promised to Abraham, but its fulfilment is promised in the future to the descendants of Abraham.

The reiteration of 12, 1-3 in 18, 18 is very significant, since in the following section, soon after God discloses his purpose to Abraham, the latter intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah. Wolff emphasizes that this was the challenge which the Yahwist put before his contemporaries, namely that they are called to effect blessing to the nations. By this intercession Abraham fulfils his responsibility of offering blessing to the nations.[266] But, as Müller points out, intercession is not the same as bestowing blessing. Abraham does not effect blessing upon the nations,[267] it is God who effects blessing or judgement upon them. The peoples have an active role in procuring blessing for themselves. Abraham only acts as the mediator or intercessor, but the blessing is directly offered by God to the peoples. It is interesting to note that Lot is not mentioned in the intercession at all. The whole concern is with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who, according to Wolff, are of special interest to the narrator, precisely because this region was subsequently the home of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who had been incorporated into the Davidic empire.[268]

The chapter has several great theological ideas knit together with the theme of promise. God reveals his secret purposes to his servant Abraham becuase of the position of responsibility which he acquires

as the recipient of promise. Yahweh demands righteousness and justice both from the descendants of Abraham and from the inhabitants of Sodom. The election of Abraham is with a purpose so that he may teach his descendants to keep the way of Yahweh and to do righteousness and justice. Because Yahweh rules over the peoples of the whole world, the sins of the inhabitants of Sodom bring them under his judgement. The most important theological questions connected with the problem of evil are raised in this chapter in Abraham's intercession : 'Will you sweep away the good and the bad together? Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right?'

7. 21, 1-7 - The birth of the son of promise.

Wellhausen attributes the whole of chapter 21 to E.[269] Gunkel makes a detailed division of this section between J, E and P. J : 1a. 2a. 6b. 7; P : 1b. 2b. 3. 4. 5; and E : 6a.[270] Von Rad says that all the documents are brought together in this section. P is the most detailed and vv. 2a - 5 perhaps refer to chapter 17 while v. 6b is apparently a reference to 18, 12.[271] Noth assigns vv. 1a and 7 to J; vv. 1b-5 to P and v. 6 to E. He, like Gunkel, thinks that originally v. 1b (P) must have had אֱלֹהִים but was secondarily changed to יהוה under the influence of v. 1a (J). Noth points out further that there are no stories of Isaac in E any more and that a remnant of a narrative of the birth of Isaac found in Gen. 21, 6 (cf. vv. 8ff.) is only a variant of an original J narrative. The pattern of the succession of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is already fixed in G, and, therefore, G must have contained at least a brief story of Isaac.[272] If Noth's suggestion is accepted, then there would already exist in G an older tradition about the fulfilment

of the promise to Abraham in the birth of Isaac. Gunkel imagines that there would have been a reference here, in the original story, to the return of the divine guests at the appointed time, when Abraham would have identified them as deities. This was probably deleted as it contained material which was offensive to the religious ideas of a later perid.[273]

(i) The birth of Isaac (vv. 1-3)

> And Yahweh visited Sarah as he had said and did to Sarah as he had promised. And she conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his[274] old age, at the time which God had told him. And Abraham named the son whom Sarah bore to him 'Isaac'.

וייהוה פקד את־שרה : Widengren points out that the verb פקד not only means 'to visit' but also 'to visit a woman' in an euphemistic sense with sexual implications.[275] On the basis of this he suggests that פקד implies such a visit of the deity to Sarah. In view of such possibilities, Widengren thinks that the story was originally a Canaanite one, which told about the sacred marriage between a deity and a princess and the birth of the royal divine child. This Canaanite story has been taken over into the Israelite traditions and transformed according to their own special theological ideas. Thus the entire story of the birth of Isaac has Canaanite traces in the narrative. But the present story has completely erased all traces of Canaanite fertility cultic rites and does not afford any room for a sexual interpretation of the term פקד .

(ii) Isaac's cicumcision (vv. 4-5)

> Abraham circumcised his son when he was eight days old as Yahweh had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

(iii) Sarah's amazement and embarrassment (vv. 6-7)

> And Sarah said, 'God has made me laugh but every one who hears will mock me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? But I have borne him a son in his old age.'

Gunkel draws attention to the different motivations in connexion with the name Isaac in vv. 6b-7 and v. 6a. The Yahwistic account (vv. 6b-7) contains the secular idea that those who hear of Sarah bearing a child in her old age, will laugh. The Elohist (v. 6a) has a pious remark that Yahweh has caused joy for Sarah.[276] Von Rad thinks that these rather contrasting reactions of Sarah are derived from two sources whose narrators attempt to give their own etymological explanations of the name.[277] NEB makes those who hear about Sarah laugh with her, 'God has given me good reason to laugh, everybody who hears will laugh with me', taking צחק in both places as an expression of joy, but in 17, 17 and 18, 12ff. the word expresses incredulity. The Septuagint renders the phrase as γέλωτά μοι ἐποίησε κύριος ὃς γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσῃ συγχαρεῖταί μοι 'The Lord has made laughter for me, for whoever will hear shall rejoice with me'. The first part may be taken as Sarah's recollection of her laughter at the tent door (18,14-15) and the second part as the laughter of the people when they hear about Sarah giving birth to a child in her old age.

The promise of posterity is at last fulfilled with the birth of the son of promise to Abraham and Sarah. Elliger observes that P has the technique of having God's words immediately fulfilled, though not in full at least in part. Elliger describes this as fulfilment in nuce. The promise of posterity (17, 4-6) and later the promise of a son through

Sarah (17,16) are fulfilled in 21, 1b-5.[278] The tension that has been increasing since the announcement of promise in 12, 1-3, a tension caused by the delay in its fulfilment, is now resolved, but there is a further test by which God proves Abraham's faith in Chapter 22.

8. Gen. 22, 15-18 - Test of the recipient of promise and renewal of promises.

This section is generally considered to be a later addition. Wellhausen ascribes chapter 22 to E but considers vv. 15-18 to be a later addition by the hand of the Jehovist.[279] Gunkel thinks that a second appearance of the angel clearly indicates the secondary nature of this passage. It is from the hand of someone who belonged to a later period, for whom the reward of having Isaac back did not seem satisfactory and who therefore reasserted the promises.[280] Skinner considers the passage secondary because of its loose connexion with the main narrative, its combination of Elohistic ideas with Yahwistic phraseology, its lack of originality and an improper use of מלאך יהוה , a phrase belonging to the prophetic inspiration and here ascribed to the angel of Yahweh.[281] Von Rad points out that the narrative definitely ended at one time with v.14. This second appearance of the angel is an addition to the ancient cultic legend, the intention of which is to link the legend with theme of promise, a motif which thematically unites all the Abraham narratives.[282] Noth assigns vv. 1-14. 19 to E but separates vv. 15-18 as an addition. He thinks that Gen. 22, 1-19 did not originally belong to the Abraham traditions at all but that it was an aetiology of a local cultic practice which existed independently of the person of Abraham till the time of its incorporation into the patriarchal stories by the Elohist.[283] Hoftijzer considers this passage to be secondary on account of its unevenness.[284]

The promise does not begin with an imperative or with a Heilsorakel or with the divine self-introductory formula as do the other promise passages, but instead it begins with נאם יהוה an expression usually found as a concluding formula in prophetic oracles. The chapter does indeed begin with a divine command to Abraham to offer up Isaac, but this is far removed from the promise passage.

> And the angel of Yahweh called Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'This is what Yahweh has said, "I have sworn by myself that, because you have done this thing and did not withhold your son, your only son from me,[285] I will indeed bless you and multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the sea shore, and your descendants shall possess the cities[286] of their enemies. And in your descendants shall all the nations of the earth wish blessing for themselves, because you have heard my voice." '

The contents of the promise in this passage are taken from the previous promise passages.[287] The new feature seems to be that of 'overcoming the gate of the enemy,' וירש זרעך את שער אויביו which appears again in the Rebekah story (וירש זרעך את שער שנאיו 24,60). The same idea is expressed with slight variation in the story of the blessing of Jacob by Isaac, 'that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings' (לרשתך את־ארץ מגוריך 28,4). Von Rad remarks that the promise that Abraham's descendants will 'possess the gate of their enemies' is an idea foreign to the basis of the patriarchal promises.[288] But perhaps here may be detected a clue to the understanding of the origin of promise in the idea of blessing. Of these passages

in which this idea of overcoming the enemies occurs, two belong to secular blessing contexts (24.60 and 28,4). Both are given in the context of marriage, and both are given at the time of the departure of the bride or bridegroom from the family. It is possible that the original patriarchal stories were blessing stories within the context of the family circle,[289] and that they were later enlarged to include the idea of divine promises, in order to provide a historical span between tension and its solution through a divine promise. This idea of overcoming the enemy was extended into a land-promise. The land-promise in this passage is indicated in this ancient blessing-formula by the idea of overcoming the enemies.

Another new feature in this section is the use of the Hithpa'el of בָּרַךְ, whereas it is in the Niph'al in the preceding promise passages (12,3 and 18,18). These two forms, Hithpa'el and Niph'al are considered by some to have the same meaning,[290] but the change from Niph'al to Hithpa'el is probably intended to convey a new emphasis.[291] The idiom הִתְבָּרֵךְ בְּ has two meanings depending on whether the preposition governs God or a human agent (a) when it governs a human agent it means 'to wish blessing for oneself with reference to so-and-so,' and (b) when connected with God, it means 'to wish blessing for oneself by invoking God,' that is to utter a blessing formula such as 'May God bless me'. Thus, the Hithpa'el seems to imply a different shade of meaning from that of the Niph'al. Wehmeier points out that there is a weakening of the content of blessing in the Hithpa'el compared with its Niph'al usage in 12, 3b; 18,18 and 28,14. Both of the passages in which the Hithpa'el occurs (22, 15-18 and 26, 3b-5) are considered to be secondary additions.[292] Wehmeier observes that both of these passages derive from the same reviser, who appears to come from circles which are intimately connected with Deuteronomy. The expression 'Because you have heard my voice' (22,18)

is the same as 'Because Abraham has heard my voice and observed all my commandments and statutes and laws' (26,5). The phrase עקב אשר appears, besides 22,18 and 26,5, only in II Sam. 12,6 which is a Deuteronomic addition (cf. 7,12; 8,20 and Num. 14,24). There is no room for promise for the peoples within the Deuteronomic idea of the election of Israel, in so far as Deuteronomy emphasizes the separation of Israel from other nations. Although, as Wehmeier observes, the Deuteronomist could not eliminate this idea of blessing for other peoples, since it was already firmly rooted in the tradition, he does weaken its emphasis by changing the Niph'al into the Hithpa'el. The Yahwist emphasized that the peoples would partake of the divine blessing through Israel, but the Deuteronomist weakens this expression so that the peoples are made to wish blessing for themselves through the mention of the name of Israel.[293] Their active role in having a share of and experience in the divine blessing is now turned into a mere wish. This is in keeping with the general observation that the Elohist, like the Deuteronomist, emphasizes the particularity of Israel, whereas the Yahwist speaks of Israel's relations with others in terms of a mission.[294]

The Elohist begins the chapter by saying that Yahweh tested Abraham, and when Abraham has stood the test successfully, God reaffirms and renews the old promises, although these are now changed in respect to their contents. Wolff points out that the idea of the 'fear of God' is the main theme of the Elohistic narrative, which now exists only in a fragmentary state. There is a play upon the roots נסה and ראה in the Elohist with special emphasis upon the test (נסה) which Yahweh imposes upon Abraham.[295]

Von Rad draws attention to a further significance of the chapter as a whole for the understanding of the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives. In commanding Abraham to offer up his only son, God seems to be contradicting and destroying all his previous promises to Abraham. All the divine promises granted to Abraham so far are bound up with Isaac, and the narratives emphasize again and again that the couple were beyond the age of child-bearing. Thus, the offering up of Isaac would mean the destruction of the only possibility of the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises. God seems, as it were, to rise up as an enemy of his own work and appears to hide himself so deeply that the recipient of promise stands utterly forsaken. Von Rad says that Israel had such an experience of forsakenness in her history. Here the author attempts to give an answer to this problem of the hiddenness of God in times when Israel seems to be completely abandoned by their God, to the effect that such forsakenness should be understood as the test of Israel by Yahweh. The story itself is an old tradition about the redeeming of the first-born by animal sacrifice and is used by the Elohist to discuss the problem inherent in promise.[296] This is an excellent example of the way in which early cultic traditions were enlarged to include the idea of promise and made to serve new theological purposes. Westermann calls this a theological passage and says that here the narrative has acquired a new function, one which does not belong to the original layer of the tradition. The new function is the formation of theological questions and their solution. Here the author introduces a new understanding of God. God was known to have acted towards his people in two ways : (a) he turned towards Israel in salvation and (b) he turned aside in wrath from Israel in times of national disaster. Here the author presents a third possibility, namely that Yahweh's turning away is not in wrath but in order to test his people.[297] Just as the old story

is extended to present a new understanding of God and of his purposes, so the old promises are reaffirmed and refashioned in terms of the author's own theological views. It may be observed here that the whole concern of the Elohist is in terms of the chosen people Israel and misses the enlarged views of the Yahwist about Israel's relations with other peoples.

9. Gen. 23 - Fulfilment of the land-promise <u>in nuce</u>

This account of the acquisition of the cave of Machpelah as a burial place by Abraham is part of P. Westermann suggests that the account of the acquisition of the cave was perhaps originally a strife-narrative reflecting the relations of the pre-Israelite tribes with their neighbours, and that it has been taken over and legalized by P.[298] Noth, on the other hand, thinks that this was an aetiology connected with a double cave (מכפלה) near Hebron.[299] The present account is represented as a partial fulfilment of the promise of the land of Canaan. Von Rad says that the Priestly writer emphasizes here that the patriarchs did not go unrewarded, in that they were buried not in Hittite soil but in their own land bought by Abraham. Thus, P presents Gen. 23 as a foreshadowing of the future benefits of salvation.[300] Vink says that P tells here about the <u>primitiae</u> of the possession of the land and about the beginning of the fulfilment of the divine promises.[301] Elliger calls the buying of the land in Gen. 23 a fulfilment <u>in nuce</u> of the promise made in Gen. 17. McEvenue notes the close relationship between chapter 23 and 17,8b. in the triple use of אחזת (23,4b. 9b. 20a) and the double use of ארץ כנען (23, 2a. 19b.), but he points out that there is no future orientation in chapter 23 (אחזת קבר) such as is found in 17, 8b (אחזת עולם)[302] Mowinckel has indeed rejected the idea that by Machpelah P meant the land

of Canaan and says that P intended to desacralize Hebron by turning it into a grave-yard.[303] However, McEvenue observes that there must be some important reason for making Hebron the burial ground of all three patriarchs, their wives and also Esau.

The interpretation that P arranges his material in terms of promise and fulfilment in nuce brings Gen. 23 into the main promise-scheme of the patriarchal narratives. Machpelah is an earnest of the more glorious fulfilment of the promise of the land of Canaan. It is interesting to note that P also, like the Yahwist, conceives of a peaceful adjustment between the patriarchs and the local population.

10. Gen. 24, 7. 60 - Recollection of the land-promise and marriage blessing.

Wellhausen assigns chapter 24 to JE while Gunkel divides it between Ja and Jb.[304] Procksch has a very detailed division of the chapter into J and E.[305] Noth thinks that it is a connecting piece between the Abraham and the Isaac stories, in line with his view that Abraham originally had no connexion whatsoever with Isaac.[306] Von Rad assigns it to J inspite of many irregularities, and says that the narrative is the most pleasant and charming of all the patriarchal stories. He draws attention to the secondary position of the usual commanding theme of promise to the patriarchs. In its place there is introduced the idea of hidden divine guidance, which is again found in the east-Jordan Jacob stories and in the Joseph story. There are no miracles, and God is seen to be acting in the human heart, mysteriously directing, evening and removing resistance. He suggests that the story belongs to the period of the so-called Solomonic enlightenment.[307] But, as has been indicated above, it is difficult to attribute to the Yahwist this concept of the hidden activity of God in view of the fact that he also expresses strongly anthropomorphic ideas

about God.[308] On the other hand, the story may be explained as a blessing story which does conceive of God's activity in the normal events of a person's life without having recourse to miracles or divine revelation. Blessing is connected with success in an enterprise, prosperity and abundant posterity, elements which are very prominent in this chapter. It begins by reporting that Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all that he did (v.1), and the ideas of blessing and success, which has the same connotation as blessing,[309] appear frequently in the course of the narrative (ברך vv. 27. 31. 34. 48. 60; צלח vv. 12. 42. 56.)

(i) Recollection of the land-promise (vv. 6-8)

> And Abraham said to him, 'On no account are you to take my son back there. Yahweh, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land and who spoke to me and swore to me saying, "To your descendants I will give this land" will send his angel ahead of you and you shall take a wife for my son there. But if the woman will not consent to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine. Only you must not take my son back there.'

V. 7 is considered by most scholars to be a later addition[310] for the following reasons : (1) The text is doubtful (2) the juxtaposition of two very similar expressions ואשר דבר לי · ואשר נשבע לי suggest a variant. (3) נשבע is a Deuteronomic expression and points to the redactor of JE, who emphasized the swearing of God. (4) V. 7 refers back to 22, 16 (נשבעתי) which is also considered to be a later addition. (5) The whole verse is seen to be a pious addition to a doubtful question raised in v. 5.

Lohfink answers these points one by one and argues that v. 7 belongs to the original narrative : (a) He points out that the textual doubt is based on a single manuscript and therefore cannot be a valid reason for rejecting this verse. (b) The double expression is due to the fact that this is the last speech of Abraham and it is therefore doubled for emphasis. The Yahwist allows Abraham to recapitulate in a single sentence the land promise granted to him by God in the previous chapters 12-15. (c) וְאִשְׁבַּע belongs to the redactor of JE and not to Deuteronomy, where it is conspicuously absent in many of the land-promise passages. (d) וְאִשְׁבַּע in 24,7 does not refer to 22,16, because the latter contains several other promise elements which are not mentioned in 24,7. (e) The original narrative behind 24, 7 must be pre-Yahwistic and it perhaps alluded to 15, 18 which at present has כָּרַת בְּרִית but which perhaps originally indicated an oath by Yahweh.[311] Further, it may be added here that the idea of an oath fits in very well in this passage since it is the main theme of the conversation between Abraham and his chief steward. Thus v. 7 could be part of the narrative form the beginning and need not be rejected as a later addition.

The land-promise here is introduced in association with a new theme, namely that the recipient of promise should remain in the land of Canaan for the fulfilment of the promise. This comes up again in chapter 26 where Yahweh commands Isaac not to go down to Egypt, but no restriction is placed upon Abraham or Jacob. Abraham is protected in Egypt and becomes rich, Jacob is promised divine protection when on his way to Paddan Aram and later when he goes down to Egypt. Isaac is the first patriarch to settle down to an agricultural way of life and to receive a good harvest. The Yahwist perhaps wants to indicate through this restriction, that settling down to an agricultural way of life was in obedience to the divine command.

The other important characteristic to note in this chapter is the expression 'Yahweh the God of heaven', and in verse 3 there is a similar expression, 'Yahweh, the God of heaven and earth', a phrase which is connected with the Canaanite deity אל עליון (14, 19. 22). Although there is opposition to marrying Canaanite wives, there does not seem to be any opposition to using Canaanite expressions and theology. The good features in Canaanite religion were taken over by the immigrating pre-Israelite tribes.

There is no mention of the promise of posterity in this section, but it is the main theme of the whole story insofar as this is concerned with the future ancestress of Abraham's posterity. There is no need for an explicit reference to the promise of posterity since Isaac is already born and has been spared by Yahweh. The promise of land is for the descendants of Abraham, not for Abraham himself. Here Abraham makes sure that Isaac does not go out of the land of promise and thus stray from the path of promise. Lot had gone out and had met with a total disaster. The course of the story is thus fixed by the theme of promise of both land and posterity. Abraham, who had himself experienced the fulfilment of the promise of posterity and land <u>in nuce</u>, provides safeguards for the future fulfilment of the promises for Isaac. Isaac is to remain in the land, and his wife's coming into it will make the possession of the land certain for future generations.

(ii) <u>The marriage blessing (v. 60)</u>.

> 'Our sister, may you be (mother of[312]) thousands
> of ten thousands; and may your descendants
> possess the cities[313] of those that hate them.'

This is a marriage blessing given to the bride at the time of her departure from her home to the home of her husband. A similar marriage blessing is given to Jacob by his father Isaac when he sent him to

Paddan Aram to marry a bride from his own relatives (28, 3-4). Both the idea of posterity and the idea of land are implied in this ancient blessing formula, and these are the main features of the patriarchal promises. The blessing wish for numerous children is very appropriate in a marriage blessing, and the blessing that her descendants might possess the gates of their enemies,[314] implies the possession of the land of the settled peoples. The expression יָשַׁב is in contrast to the life of nomadic people who do not have a fixed abode. The story in this chapter includes both the idea of guidance, which is connected with nomadic culture and religion, and the idea of blessing, which belongs to Canaanite culture and religion. However, the idea of blessing is given special importance over the idea of guidance.

B. The theme of promise in the Isaac narratives.

The narratives about the patriarch Isaac are very meagre compared with those concerning Abraham and Jacob. Weiser observes that the traditions about the younger Isaac are connected with the Abraham stories and the traditions about the older Isaac with the Jacob-Joseph stories.[315] Noth points out that the Yahwist has strung together laconic and fragmentary notices on the narrative theme 'Isaac and the people of Gerar,' and that much of the material which originally belonged to Isaac has been transferred to Abraham. Noth devotes further attention to the tradition-history and arrives at the conclusion that the Isaac stories belong to an earlier cultural stage than the west-Jordan Jacob stories. They reflect a period when the pre-Israelite tribes in the south were in contact with the inhabitants of the settled land, in areas which they used as summer pastures, but had not yet themselves adopted a sedentary way of life. The main theme of the stories, 'the right of wells' indicates

the conditions of life in the cultural situation to which these stories belong. They are prefaced by a promise passage (26, 2-4) the aim of which is to connect them with the main theme of the patriarchal narratives, 'promise to the patriarchs'.[316] Westermann follows Noth in considering the Isaac narratives to be very ancient and earlier than the west-Jordan Jacob traditions. He finds the 'strife motif' to be the dominant theme in these stories. The aim of the narratives is not the naming of wells, but to describe the settlement of strifes and the subsequent adjustments between the pre-Israelite tribes and the people of the land. Westermann considers that the strife motif was originally connected with the blessing motif. Blessing effects increase of posterity, which in turn leads to a friction with the people of the land for living space, and the promise of land is then introduced as the God-given solution to this tension arising from strife for living space.[317] The promise to Isaac is given in two passages (26, 2-4 and v. 24). Gunkel wants to transpose Gen. 26 before 25, 22ff., to avoid the apparent contradiction about Rebekah's condition. In 26, 6-11 Isaac tells the men of Gerar that Rebekah is his sister, and nothing is mentioned in the story about the twins born to her in chapter 25.[318] Von Rad considers the promise passage to be a later addition.[319] Hoftijzer compares this chapter with Gen. 12, 10ff.; 20.1ff., and 21, 22ff., which narrate the corresponding stories about Abraham and Sarah and, finding that no promises are mentioned in them, concludes that the promise passages here have been secondarily added to conform with the Gen. xv group.[320] Seebass observes that it is an awkward insertion formed out of 46, 3-4a and the declaration in 12, 1.3.[321]

1. The first promise to Isaac (vv. 2-4)

This passage contains the following main features :

(i) The command not to go down to Egypt, v.2. (ii) The promise to be with Isaac and to bless him together with the promise of land, v. 3. (iii) The promise of posterity and land in the form of Heilsschilderung, v. 4a. (iv) Wider implications of promise, v. 4b.

(i) The command not to go down to Egypt (v.2)

> And Yahweh appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt. Settle down in the land which I bid you.'

The motif of not going out of the land of Canaan has already been expressed in 24, 6. 8, where, in connexion with Isaac's marriage, Abraham commands his chief steward not to take Isaac out of the land of promise.[322] Here the reference to Egypt is not demanded by the context.[323] It has already been reported in v. 1 that Isaac went to Gerar, and there is no indication that he intended to go to Egypt.[324] Von Rad thinks that this prohibition was introduced in order to 'increase suspense' as to how Isaac would be able to survive without going out of the famine-stricken land.[325] But it may, rather, reflect the tradition-history of how the Isaac tradition of the sojourn in Egypt was suppressed and transposed to Jacob in order to give importance to the latter as the patriarch of Israel. Seebass suggests that the direction in 46, 1-3 was originally connected with the Isaac clan and not with Jacob at all. The traditions of the Isaac group were carried to Shechem by part of the Joseph tribe, who for a time lived with the Isaac group in Beersheba, and they connected them with the patriarch Israel at Shechem. It was only later, when the Israel traditions centred in Shechem were connected with the Jacob traditions in Bethel, that these Isaac traditions were transferred to Jacob. The promise given to

Jacob-Israel in 46, 4a is given to him only in virtue of his belonging to the Isaac clan.[326] Weiser points out that the Isaac tradition was subordinated to Jacob and that 46, 1-3 actually belongs to the Isaac tradition.[327] Jepsen also thinks that at one time the members of the Isaac group journeyed down to Egypt.[328] The importance of Jacob as the patriarch of the northern tribal amphictyony would have attracted to him the great tradition of the sojourn in Egypt, which originally belonged to Isaac,[329] and, as a result, the tradition of going down to Egypt has been completely suppressed in the Isaac traditions.

The expression שכן בארץ אשר אמר אליך ('Settle down in the land which I bid you') recalls the initial promise to Abraham where Yahweh says to Abraham, 'Go to the land which I will show you' (12, 1).

(ii) <u>The promise to be with Isaac and to bless him, together with the promise of land (v. 3)</u>.

> 'Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you
> and I will bless you, for I will give all
> these lands to you and to your descendants,
> and I will fulfil the oath which I swore to
> Abraham your father.'

ואהיה עמך : Preuss observes that the Yahwist uses this formula first in the Isaac story and that it is the Elohist who uses it in the Abraham story. He points out that this expression indicates a basic structure of Old Testament faith and thought, originating from the nomadic idea that the deity goes with his people, shepherds and protects them and fights for them. It is used as a general formula of assistance from the time of David. Preuss comments further that this idea is not found amongst the neighbouring peoples of Israel and thus represents a genuinely Israelite term reflecting Israelite piety.[330] This promise is shown to be fulfilled in the course of the story when Abimelech says, 'We have

seen plainly that Yahweh is with you' (26, 28 עִמָּךְ). Pedersen suggests that the expression 'Yahweh is with someone,' is another term for blessing,[331] but it has to be noted that the term itself comes from a nomadic background and is the equivalent of the idea of blessing in the religion of the settled people. וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ is followed by וַאֲבָרְכֶךָּ 'and I will bless you,' a concept connected with the religion of the settled people of Canaan.[332] In this passage, then, the blessing idea from the Kulturland is connected with the nomadic idea of God being with his worshippers, guiding and protecting them.[333] Blessing is here given as a promise and is fulfilled in Isaac's successful agricultural activities in the land (26, 12).

The land-promise in v. 3 is connected with the oath made by Yahweh to Abraham (cf. 22, 16 and 24, 7). It refers to the land-promise to Abraham in Gen. 15, 18. The land-promise is repeated in the next verse.

(iii) The promise of numerous posterity and of land in the form of Heilsschilderung (v. 4a).

> 'And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the sky, and I will give to your descendants all these lands.'

The promise to multiply descendants is also given to Ishmael (16, 10 J; 17, 20 P; 21, 18 E ?), but the promise of land is given to Isaac alone. The promise of the land is the supreme promise of God to Israel while the promise of increased posterity is extended to other nations as well. The fact that other nations existed and flourished in great numbers at the time of the narrator would have suggested to him that the promise of posterity extended also to them.

(iv) Wider implications of promise (vv. 4b-5).

> 'And all the nations of the earth shall wish blessing for themselves in your descendants, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my

charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws'.

This is a promise passage in the Abraham narratives (22, 18) now adapted for the Isaac narratives.

22, 18 והתברכו בזרעך כל גויי הארץ עקב אשר שמעת בקלי

26, 4b-5 והתברכו בזרעך כל גויי הארץ: עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי

The Hithpa'el (והתברכו) gives an important role to the Israelites as those whose names are invoked in blessing, and it assigns a correspondingly passive role to the other peoples as those who wish for themselves blessing in the name of Israel. This is very different from the Yahwist who assigns an active role to the other peoples in procuring blessing for themselves.[334]

The merit of Abraham as the basis for the promise to Isaac is a new feature in the patriarchal narratives and is perhaps a later addition. Gunkel thinks that this is a Deuteronomic idea and points out that it does not suit the spirit of the old saga but shows later spiritual piety.[335] Skinner observes that it is made up both of Priestly and of Deuteronomic expressions (cf. Lev. 26, 46; Deut. 6,2; 28,45; 30,10).[336] Von Rad comments that this pious description of Abraham is not found even in the Priestly document.[337] The expression עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי is reminiscent of 22,18 עקב אשר שמעת בקלי and refers to the sacrifice of Isaac and the absolute obedience of Abraham in executing Yahweh's command. The expression עקב אשר בקלי in both passages points to this, but a later reader who perhaps felt that בקלי did not explicitly indicate what it meant, expanded it by adding וישמר משמרתי מצותי חקותי ותורתי. Thus here we have an extension of an original promise in terms of law, and this may well point to a later date.

The promises are introduced programmatically so that the rest of the Isaac narrative relates how these were fulfilled to the patriarch and to his descendants. Jacob and Esau have their children before the death of

Isaac in 35, 29. Isaac settles in the land of Gerar, reaps an abundant harvest (26, 12f.) and obtains the right of wells by his treaty with him Abimelech (26, 26-33). Abimelech seeks to make this treaty with him because he had perceived that God was with Isaac. By making this treaty with Isaac, Abimelech seeks the friendship of Isaac in order to have a share in God's blessings received by the blessed one.[338]

2. The second promise to Isaac (v. 24).

> And Yahweh appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I shall be with you and multiply your descendants for the sake of Abraham my servant.'

Gunkel considers this passage to be a later insertion because in v. 25 the altar foundation precedes the pitching of the tent and the ideas contained in this promise are the same as those in 26, 3a.[339] Skinner, on the other hand, points out that there are no linguistic marks of late authorship in the passage and that the mention of the altar foundation before the tent is not adequate reason to prove a dislocation in the text here.[340] The promise that Yahweh will be with Isaac and that he should not fear, is very appropriate in the context since in the preceding verses Isaac confronts the envious Philistines in connexion with water-places, and the treaty in the following verses is presented as a direct outcome of this promise. However, the promise of increased descendants does not seem to be very necessary here. Its presence could be explained from the fact that there is a general tendency in the patriarchal narratives to group together different promises given in different contexts,[341] perhaps with a view to emphasizing the completeness of the divine promises.

Dion suggests that the expression אנכי עמך belongs to the Heilsorakel formula which is connected with the salvation oracle declared by the priest at the cultic centres. For him, Gen. 26, 24 is the ἱερὸς λόγος of Beersheba, which later became the basis of the Elohist fragment in 46, 1-5. Dion argues that this formula, connected with the priestly oracle and not with holy war oracle, reflects peaceful relations between Israel and her neighbours.[342] But it may be pointed out that the formula in the present text is associated with a strife narrative. Westermann considers the strife about Lebensraum and Lebensmittel to be the original cause of the struggles of the patriarchs with the people of the land. The present story points to these motifs in the account of Isaac's confrontation with the Philistines.[343] The Heilsorakel formula in this narrative is introduced in place of the imperative or the divine command in the other promise passages in the patriarchal narratives.[344]

This promise is depicted as having been fulfilled in the good harvest which Isaac obtained that year and in the treaty which Abimelech made with Isaac. In reference to both of these it is reported that Yahweh blessed Isaac (26, 12. 29). The Isaac stories give the impression that they were perhaps originally written with blessing as their main theme. The word blessing occurs four times in this chapter, and the events are described as the outcome of Yahweh's blessing upon Isaac.

The main elements of promise in the Abraham narratives can also be observed in the promises made to Isaac. The divine command promise and blessing, Heilsschilderung and the Heilsorakel formula can all be paralleled in the Abraham narratives.

C. The theme of promise in the Jacob narratives.

Westermann points out the importance of blessing in the Jacob

narratives in contrast to the Abraham narratives which, according to him, are predominantly promise narratives. He says that after chapter 25 there are no genuine promise narratives at all, and the few that are present are later interpolations or additions. J, E and P following them, have assigned the important promises to Abraham.[345] But a survey of all the promise and blessing passages in the patriarchal narratives shows that the promise passages in the Abraham narratives also contain the idea of blessing, while the blessing passages in the Jacob narratives also contain the idea of promise.[346] The blessing of Jacob and Esau by Isaac, for example, is enlarged into promise in order to include the national fortunes of Israel and Edom in the time of David and Solomon.[347]

1. Gen. 27 - The blessing of Jacob and Esau by Isaac.

Gunkel attributes this chapter to J and E.[348] Von Rad says that it is a skilful fabric formed out of the threads of J and E. He observes further that blessing in this chapter is independent of the uniformly formulated patriarchal promises (12, 1-3; 13, 14-16; 22, 17; 26, 24; 28, 3f. 13-15; etc.).[349] But the contents of the blessings and the story as a whole still reflect the main traditional characteristics of the patriarchal promises of land and posterity. The blessing concerns itself with the fertility of the land and the future glory or subordination of the sons who receive it from their dying fathers. The blessing is given in the form of a pre-cultic rite practised within the family circle. The main features of the act may be outlined as follows :[350]

1. The summons of the father (or the request of the son)
2. The identification of the one to be blessed
3. The presentation of food and drink to the father in order to strengthen the one who is to bless
4. The approach of the son and the father's kiss
5. The blessing

The blessing upon Jacob is pronounced by invoking the deity.

'The smell of my son is like the smell of the
open country which Yahweh has blessed!
May God give you of[351] the dew of heaven
and of the fatness of the earth,
and abundance of grain and wine.
Peoples shall serve you,
and nations bow down[352] to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down[353] to you.
Cursed be those who curse you,
and blessed be those who bless you! ' (vv. 27b - 29)

But there is no reference to God in the blessing of Esau

'Behold far from[354] the fatness of the earth shall
your dwelling be,
and far from [354] the dew of heaven above[355]
And you shall live relying upon[356] your sword,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you grow restless[357]
you shall tear away his yoke from off your neck'. (vv. 39f.)

Perhaps the author wants to emphasize that God is the author of positive blessing and that the negative blessing[358] which Esau receives is not from God but is an outcome of his own actions. The author alludes to the negligent behaviour of Esau in selling his birthright to Jacob (25, 27-34). By selling his birthright (בכרה), Esau has lost his blessing (ברכה). Esau's negative blessing almost amounts to a curse,[359] in which the invocation of Yahweh's name is forbidden at quite an early stage when its malicious use was made punishable (Ex. 20, 7; Deut. 5, 11).[360] The blessing, once pronounced, could not be retracted, and thus Isaac is helpless, although he realizes that he has been cheated by Jacob. The behaviour of the **recipient** does not in any way seem to affect the blessing pronounced upon him. In 28, 11f., God confirms this blessing through his

promise to Jacob. This reflects a very early stage when morality and religion were not closely associated. Gunkel points out that the God of this old saga is not the majestic Yahweh, the law-giver of the decalogue but a much more primitive deity, who guards his favourites and his tribes in all their ways, even the crooked ones. He cites parallels from Greek literature. J and E incorporated these stories in their accounts as they had found them in the tradition.[361] Moreover the concluding couplet in the blessing, 'cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you,' make it impossible either to retract the blessing or to curse Jacob. It was believed that a word once uttered had magical power within it to effect the intention of the speaker. The word was considered to be dynamic and concrete and as the extension of the person who utters it, so that it brought about what the speaker had intended. But in Israel the magical element was repudiated from the outset, even though faint traces of it still remained in the idea of blessing and curse. This later develops into the prophetic idea of the word of God.[362]

Although the story indicates that the blessing deceitfully received by Jacob was in fact intended for Esau,[363] the contents show that these agricultural and pastoral blessings are appropriate for Jacob, a semi-nomadic shepherd who was in process of changing over to a sedentary way of life. The blessing received by Esau, which was not meant for him at all, is most appropriate for him as a wandering hunter.[364] The original story may have contained a note that Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau but the details of the blessings may have been added later. It is possible that the Yahwist has supplied actual words of the blessing and included in them the historical circumstances of Israel and Edom in his own time, namely that of Davidic-Solomonic empire. Here blessings connected with individual persons are enlarged to include the fortunes of the nations of Israel and Edom.[365] Noth traces the tradition-history of these two characters and

says that they represent the stages of cultural transition through which the Ephraimites had passed, from a hunting culture to a pastoral culture, and from a pastoral culture to an agrarian culture. Esau, according to Noth, is not a foreigner but the counter-part of the west-Jordan Jacob. These traditions were carried over to the east-Jordan area by the Ephraimites who went from the west-Jordan and colonized the east-Jordan lands. Here they connected the west-Jordan Jacob-Esau traditions with the east-Jordan Jacob-Laban traditions. The connexion of Esau and Edom was made secondarily at a much later period.[366] The present narrative represents both the hunter and the herdsman seeking to settle to an agricultural way of life. The blessing intended for Esau and the blessing obtained by Jacob show that both were changing over to agriculture, but that the latter had outwitted the former and left him to continue in his previous occupation.

Maag points out that the association of Edom with Esau, represented as a dullard and as a clumsy and impulsive man, appears to be most unsatisfactory since Edom is associated with Wisdom, had a monarchical system of government earlier than Israel and represents a very ancient cultured people. Maag explains that the stories were originally culture myths of shepherd and hunter, in which the motif of brothers was changed to that of two eponyms - Jacob and Esau. Of these two, the Jacob traditions continued to be handed down carefully, while those of Esau were altogether forgotten. When David conquered Edom, the Edomites, who settled much earlier than Israel, were considered to be the older brother of Israel and to have been conquered by the younger one. Maag suggests that it was the Yahwist who associated Edom with Esau in the time of David.[367] Maag's explanation is valid, except for his attributing to the Yahwist the association of Edom with Esau. The Yahwist shows a tolerant

attitude towards Canaan and the people dwelling in and around Canaan,[368] and it would be difficult to conceive that he had deliberately misrepresented this cultured nation as a dull and uncultured people through connecting them with Esau. This element could perhaps be attributed to a popular tradition current among a people who were rejoicing over their superior position through the establishment of the Davidic Solominic empire.

Certain important characteristics of the concept of blessing may be noted in this story : (i) The power of the spoken word in unconditionally effecting blessing. The ancient magical ideas were purged from the Israelite blessing-concept, but their traces can still be perceived in this story in the idea that blessing operated without any reference to moral or ethical obligations on the part of the recipient. (ii) Blessing is invoked in the name of God. God is considered to be the one who blesses, and all blessings are wished in his name. (iii) The context in which the blessing was pronounced is indicated in this chapter. The dying father blesses his children as his last wish and legacy. Similarly, Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph on his death bed (48, 19f.). The Priestly writer, finding that there is no account of Abraham having blessed Isaac, adds that after the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac (25, 11a). (iv) A blessing becomes effective from the moment of its utterance. There is no historical distance between blessing and its unfolding such as exists between promise and its fulfilment. (v) Blessing operates in the course of events and not apart from them in a miraculous manner. It needs the effort of the recipient in experiencing it. Murtonen defines blessing as functional and points out that it does not function by itself like oracles or oracular dreams, its realization depends, rather, upon the abilities and efforts of the recipient. But this has no relation to ethical or moral requirements.[369] The east-Jordan Jacob stories describe the efficienty and shrewdness of Jacob in advancing his fortunes, which

are then regarded as the outcome of blessing. (vi) Blessing also endues its recipient with power and makes him a capable and vigorous man, and this power then radiates from him in all directions, so that all who come into contact with him experience this blessing. For example, Laban is said to have been blessed on account of Jacob.[370] (vii) An original blessing story is here enlarged in terms of promise and fulfilment, whereby the fortunes of Israel and Edom are seen as a fulfilment of this blessing, which is thus interpreted as promise. (27, 29. 40).

2. Gen. 28, 3-4 - The Priestly writer's account of the blessing of Jacob by Isaac.

There is general agreement amongst scholars that this passage belongs to P.[371] The priestly writer removes all traces of hatred and discord in the patriarchal narratives. This could be seen in the Abraham-Lot narratives (13, 6. 11b. 12ab.) and in the Isaac-Ishmael account (25,9). Here too, P removes the motif of 'deceit-enmity-flight' found in the JE story of Jacob and Esau (27) and introduces a new reason for the movement of Jacob to Paddan Aram. According to P, Jacob does not deceive his father Isaac and thus flee from the anger of his brother Esau but goes there in obedience to his father's wishes and with his blessing. Isaac sends him there to marry from his mother's people. The narrator tells how Esau himself saw that Jacob had obeyed his parents and had gone to Paddan Aram (28, 6). Later both Jacob and Esau come together peacefully to bury their father (35, 29) and separate from each other again since the land cannot sustain them (36, 6-8), a motif similar to that expressed in the Abraham-Lot story (13, 6). By introducing this marriage motif P focusses attention on the question of mixed marriages which was the burning problem of his time. As this blessing is given in connexion with marriage, this passage may be termed a 'marriage blessing'.

The marriage blessing (vv. 3-4)

> 'And may El-Shaddai bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. And may he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, to possess the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham.'

Isaac invokes El-Shaddai (אל שדי) to bless (ברך), to make fruitful (פרה) and to multiply (רבה) Jacob, so that he may become a company of peoples and that he may give the blessing (ברכה) of Abraham to Jacob and his descendants and that they may possess the land where he sojourns (ארץ מגוריו), the land which God gave (נתן) to Abraham. All these words are found in P's account of the renewal of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17). Here the expressions פרה , רבה , קהל עמים and the possession of the ארץ מגוריו are very appropriate in the context of a marriage blessing. Increased posterity leads to the problem of Lebensraum for the increased population. The marriage blessing in the story of Rebekah contains similar ideas of increase of posterity and possession of the land (24, 60),[372] expressed in the words 'may your descendants possess the cities of those who hate them'. Similar ideas of increased posterity and possession of the cities of their enemies are found in the promise passage in 22, 17. These promises point to the time when the nomadic peoples living on the edges of the arable land, were seeking to settle in them, but were being driven away by the local inhabitants. Here again P removes the conflict and enmity found in the corresponding blessing passages by changing 'possess the cities of the enemies, those that hate them' (וירש זרעך את שער אויביך 22,17; וירש זרעך את שער שנאיו 24, 60) to 'possess the land of your sojourn' (לרשתך את־ארץ מגוריך).

Gross observes that פרה and רבה are found in other promise passages in the Jacob narratives (35, 11 and 48,4), in the promise to Abraham in 17, 2. 6, and in the promise to Ishmael in 17, 20 and concludes that this is a fixed formula in P by which the promise of increase was expressed. Gross considers Gen. 17 to be secondary in comparison with the Jacob narratives of P in 28, 3f.; 25, 11 and 48, 3f., because (i) instead of the idea of blessing there emerges the idea of the covenant in 17, 8, and (ii) the succession of פרה and רבה in inverted in 17, 1-8 and the two words are separated from each other (17, 2. 6). In 35, 11 the words appear in Qal imperative form as in the creation blessing (1, 28) and in the Noahic blessing (9, 7), but in all the other P passages they appear in the Hiph'il form. Gross offers two possible explanations: (a) P perhaps changed to the Qal imperative a word which was normally used in the Hiph'il in order to emphasize the idea that Israel was created by Yahweh, just as the creation blessing in 1, 28 and the Noahic blessing in 9,7 both have Qal imperatives; (b) or the Jacob narratives are derived from an old blessing concept, and this idea is excluded from the person of Abraham in Gen. 17, 1-8. Thus the imperative appears to be form-critically primary and 35, 11 represents an old Priestly tradition.

Gross calls Jacob the man of blessings and Abraham the man of promises. But it is interesting to note that the only promise given to Abraham in P (Gen. 17, 4-8) is referred to in 28,4 (P) as the blessing given to Abraham (ברכת אברהם), and the promise given to Sarah includes blessing (17,16). Here the blessing is given within the context of marriage and family and, in 35, 11, as a divine command of blessing in terms of the creation of the nation Israel. It may perhaps be observed in 35, 11 that the command or imperative preceding promise is not given separately but is associated with the words connected with blessing, פרה and רבה , whereas in 28, 3f., the imperative is provided in the context (v.2) and therefore

פרה and רבה are given in the Hiph'il, as the direct outcome of blessing.[373] It may be observed further that 28,3f is a blessing passage and not a promise passage and therefore does not necessarily require an imperative to precede it.

Gross suggest that the formula קהל עמים is original in the Jacob narratives (28, 3 קהל עמים ; 35, 11 קהל גוים ; 48,4 קהל עמים) compared with המון גוים in the Abraham narrative (17,5 המון גוים) where it appears as an explanation of the new name אברהם . Gross thinks that although קהל עמים was the original formula in the Jacob narratives, the עמים in 35,11 has been changed to גוים through the influence of 17, 4 in order to connect the promise with kings, which are found together in 17, 4.[374] The term 'kings' makes it semantically necessary to use the word גוי and not עם .[375] Thus, according to Gross, קהל עמים is the original expression in the Jacob narratives. Von Rad draws attention to the cultic implications of the term קהל and suggests that the promise in 28, 3 of קהל עמים may be considered as a 'rudimentary prophecy' of a universal community of nations.[376] Vink approves of this cultic interpreation, although he does not accept von Rad's reference to the eschatological character of the cultic community. According to Vink, קהל עמים points to the settlement of the descendants of Jacob throughout the world (e.g. Egypt 48, 4-6), which leads to the establishment of a cultic community of peoples. Here the reference is not to the other nations but to Israel dispersed throughout the world, and this would point to the historical circumstances of the Israelites in the Exilic period to which P himself belongs.[377] Thus a simple marriage blessing is made to imply the future historical circumstances of Israel in the Exilic period and thus almost takes the form of a promise with a historical span between the promise and its fulfilment. Gen. 28, 3-4 is yet another example of an ancient marriage blessing similar to that in 24, 60.

3. Gen. 28, 13-15 - Yahweh's promise to Jacob at Bethel

This narrative is generally attributed to the Yahwist.[378] Here God appears to the patriarch and promises to him posterity and land. Gunkel classifies this narrative as an aetiological cultic saga which explains the origin of the cult and the name of the place Bethel.[379] Westermann, on the other hand, studying the pre-literary tradition-history of the patriarchal narratives comes to the conclusion that there are no aetiological sagas in the patriarchal narratives, only aetiological motifs, which have been secondarily added to the ancient narratives. The narratives themselves have a different aim from those of the aetiologies which are introduced into them with an altogether different purpose. He finds the so-called cultic aetiologies to be originally journey notices with an element of surprise in them. The tension in such narratives is created by the surprise of the patriarchs at their sudden encounter with God when they were on a journey. The Bethel narrative (28, 10-22) would have originally stated that Jacob had this experience while he was on his journey to Paddan Aram. Westermann suggests that each of the four promises mentioned in this passage (the land - v. 13, numerous posterity - v. 14ab, the significance of promise to all peoples - v. 14c and the promise of the presence - v. 15) would originally have developed out of different need situations in which these separate promises were introduced to release the tension. The land promise could have formed the kernel of this narrative, parallel to Gen. 12,7. The special formulation of the promise 'the land on which you are lying' signifies the special circumstances in which this promise was given at first to Jacob. He received it while he was fleeing from the land, before his angry brother.[380]

There are several parallels to the contents of this promise passage

in the Abraham and Isaac narratives (v. 13a=26, 24; v. 13b=13, 15; 12,7; v.14a=13, 16; v. 14b=12,3 and 18, 18). The only new element is that Yahweh will keep Jacob wherever he goes and that he will bring him back to Canaan, a promise which is very appropriate for one who is fleeing to a foreign land.[381] This promise is the characteristic feature of the God of the nomads, who is not bound to a place but moves with his people.[382] Here it is interesting to note that although the promise is that of a nomadic deity, the deity himself is connected with Bethel. This perhaps points to the stage when the nomadic gods of the fathers were localized at the Canaanite sanctuaries. In the course of the story, Jacob expresses surprise that Yahweh was in that place (28, 16), and yet he names the place Bethel (28, 19). Eissfeldt observes that v. 19 presupposes El as the deity who dwelt there,[383] and maintains that this narrative originally was connected with El and not with Yahweh.[384] And yet the ideas of protection on the way and of guidance point to the nomadic deity of the 'god of the fathers'. Thus, this promise passage contains a combination of the Yahwistic, nomadic and Canaanite features joined together into one grand promise-complex.

The Bethel promises may be divided as follows : (i) The self-introduction of Yahweh and the oracle of salvation, v. 13a; (ii) The land-promise, v. 13b; (iii) The promise of descendants in the form of Heilsschilderung, v. 14ab; (iv) Wider implications of promise, v. 14c; (v) The promise of protection on the way and of guidance, v. 15.

(i) The self-introduction of Yahweh and the oracle of salvation (v. 13a)

> And behold! Yahweh stood in front of him and said, 'I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac, fear not.[385]

חזה , in verse 13 and also in verse 12, expresses astonishment about the vision. It is a term used in connexion with a dream (37, 7. 9; 40, 9. 16; 41, 1. 2. 3. 5. 6. 17ff.; Jud. 7, 13; Dan. 2, 31 Aramaic חזה , 4, 7. 10)[386] Oppenheim understands this dream experience in 28, 12ff., as as 'an unintentional incubation' and finds a parallel to it in the dream of Tuthmose IV. These two dreams have one common feature in that the devotee accidentally alights upon a place where the deity of the place appears to him in a dream. Oppenheim examines dreams in ancient near eastern literature and in the Old Testament and concludes that all dreams which convey a divine message need not be interpreted as actual incubation experiences, because the pattern of an incubation dream was a theologically accepted literary device.[387] Here, the complex nature of the contents of the promise and the different cultural and religious ideas represented in it perhaps point to a conclusion similar to that of Oppenheim, namely that this was a formulation of the Yahwist, who was using a current literary device for introducing a divine message of promise.

עליו is translated 'in front of him' as in 18, 2. In view of the immediately preceding Elohistic section, one is inclined to think that the word refers to the ladder. The Septuagint, the Vulgate and the Peshitta render it in this way, 'upon it'.[388] But 'in front of him' is appropriate in J.

Zimmerli observes that אני יהוה is a stereotyped self-introductory formula representing the revelation of Yahweh in the Old Testament. Through this formula Yahweh declares his name and reveals himself and his activity to his people. Thus revelation of the name is the self-presentation, self-representation and self-disclosure of God.[389] Rendtorff adds that the God who reveals himself is not an unknown God but the God who was with the fathers. Thereby God's revelation includes a reference

to previous, already known history.[390] Here in this passage both these elements are included in God's self-introductory formula אנכי יהוה אלהי אברהם אביך אלהי יצחק. Traditio-historically two different religions can be traced here, namely Yahwism and the religion of the 'gods of the fathers'. It is by joining these two traditions together that promise is stretched from the patriarchal period to the period of the Settlement. A third element appears in the association of the whole scene with the Canaanite sanctuary of Bethel. Thus all the three elements which make up the main features of the pre-history of the religion of Israel[391] can be observed in this section.

The Septuagint supplies the Heilsorakel formula μὴ φοβοῦ which is not found in the Massoretic text.[392] This perhaps points to the fact that the LXX translators were not happy with a promise passage which did not have an initial imperative, which is a characteristic feature of the promise-pattern in the patriarchal narratives. Therefore they introduce the Heilsorakel formula which appears in promise passages without an initial imperative (15, 1; 26, 24; 46, 3).[393] Then follows the land-promise.

(ii) The land-promise (v. 13b)

> 'The land on which you are lying, I will
> give to you and to your descendants.'

This verse, with a definite land-promise, is similar to 12,7, 'To your descendants I give this land.' Dus suggests that even 12,7 originally belonged to the Jacob traditions localized at Shechem and that the Abrahamic covenant tradition in 15, 8ff., should originally have followed 12, 7a and have been concluded by 12, 7b and that these traditions were later transferred to Abraham.[394]

(iii) The promise of descendants in the form of Heilsschilderung (v. 14ab)

> 'And your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth And you shall spread abroad far and wide, to the west and the east, to the north and the south.'

Heilsschilderung is originally connected with the concept of blessing and describes the future state of salvation. Here the increase of descendants is connected with the need for living space, so that it is promised that they will spread to all sides of the land.

(iv) Wider implications of promise (v. 14c)

> 'And in you all the families of the earth will procure blessing for themselves.'

ובזרעך at the end of the verse may be deleted as a later addition as it is not found in the parallel passages (12,3; 18,18).[395] The wider implications of promise are expressed in terms similar to those in 12,3 and 18,18. The Yahwist again employs the Niph'al form and thereby emphasizes the active role of the other peoples in acquiring blessing for themselves. The patriarchs only serve as mediators of blessing; it is Yahweh himself who blesses all peoples together with his chosen people.[396] The idea of blessing which belongs to the Canaanite religion is made the basis for the wider implications of promise.

(v) The promise of protection on the way and of guidance (v. 15)

> 'And behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that which I have promised[397] to you.'

The idea of God being with someone and the idea of protection and guidance are connected with nomadic religion. Thus within this promise ideas from Canaan and from nomadic culture are joined together.

The promise in verse 15 (J) is similar in content to that of the vow of Jacob in verses 20-21 (E).

Verse 15. הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ
וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ
וְהֵשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת

Verses 20-21. אִם יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי
וְשָׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ
וְשָׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי

Gunkel points out that the vow of Jacob in E is more original than the vow of Yahweh in J. E narrates it in a simple fiction style, the concern of the individual Jacob to return home safely from a foreign country, whereas in J it is made into the promise of land. The Yahwist's promise account is an advance over the original journey vow.[398] Richter, on the other hand, points out that it is the Elohist who follows the Yahwist here and that in place of the promise of God, abruptly introduces the scheme of a vow and its fulfilment by Jacob.[399] It may perhaps be explained from the fact that the Elohist, with his aversion for Canaan, its culture and its religion,[400] was not happy with the association of promise with the deity of Bethel and therefore changed the promise of the deity into the vow of Jacob, which is represented as fulfilled by Yahweh in the following narrative.

Here is another context in which the patriarchal promises or blessings are found, namely that of 'the journey'. This motif is also found in the traditions connected with the other two patriarchs (Gen. 12, 1-3; 15 Abraham; Gen. 26, 3-5. 24 Isaac). Jacob receives the promises when he is on his way to a foreign land. Later, in 46. 1-3, Jacob receives promises in Beersheba, while he is on his way to Egypt.

4. Gen. 31, 3 (J). 13 (E) - The promise to Jacob in Haran.

Gunkel points out that the Yahwist gives two reasons for Jacob's flight, a secular one to the effect that the sons of Laban envied him

and a religious one to the effect that God commanded him to return to his native land. Similarly, the Elohist also offers a secular reason, namely that Laban did not regard Jacob with favour and a religious one, that God had asked him to leave.[401] The original story may have expressed only the secular reason, but later both the Yahwist and the Elohist introduced religious reasons to exonerate Jacob. Similarly, in the story of Abraham's expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, a divine command is introduced to exonerate Abraham (21, 12-13).

(i) <u>The divine command (v. 3a)</u>

> And Yahweh said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred.'

(ii) <u>The promise (v. 3b)</u>

> 'And I will be with you.'

Command precedes promise as in other promise narratives. Two expressions in this promise are similar to those in the Bethel narrative (28, 15) :

28, 15	אוכי עמך	והשבתיך
31, 3	אהיה עמך	שוב

The land of Canaan is referred to as the land of Jacob's fathers and kindred, not as ארץ מגוריו as it is by P. J has, on the whole, an enthusiastic appraisal of Canaan, its culture and its religion. The promise that Yahweh will be with Jacob is appropriate here as Jacob is about to set out on a journey to Canaan.

(iii) <u>Jacob narrates to his wives God's command to leave (v. 13)</u>

This passage is a report concerning the revelation and command received by Jacob in verse 3, and this is confirmed by the repetition of the word מולדת which is a word characteristic of the Yahwist.[402]

Here the reference to the vow at Bethel is a new feature which is not reported in verse 3 at all. Furthermore, there is no reference to the promise made in verse 3 but only an allusion to the vow made in 28, 20-22. Here the Elohist takes מולדת from J but changes the reference to promise into a vow as in the Bethel story.

> 'I am the God[403] who appeared to you at the sanctuary where you anointed a Massebah and[404] where you vowed to me a vow. Now arise, go from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'

האל בית אל : Alt suggests that here and in 35, 7, the Elohist introduces the old title of God אל בית אל.[405] Speiser says that אל בית אל is possible as a divine title, since a similar divine title, Il-Bayti-Ilu, is found in an Assyrio-Tyrian treaty, but he comments that the expression האל בית אל is syntactically untenable.[406] Gesenius-Kautzsch explain it as an elliptical form of expression and suggest that האל בית אל is equivalent to האל אל בית אל.[407] The LXX (G^D) renders 31, 13 by ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, which presupposes האל הנראה אליך במקום, but not אל בית אל. Kittel rejects G^D in favour of $G^{D\,sil.}$ and G^E which have ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ instead of ἐν τῷ τόπῳ and argues that the latter have a better rendering corresponding to the MT אל בית אל (ב) than the former. However, he points out that בית is translated in the LXX both by τόπος and οἶκος and translates 31, 13 as 'I am the God who appeared to you in Bethel where .....'[408] This rendering is approved by Gunkel.[409] Eissfeldt, on the other hand, observes that in the Bethel narratives of Genesis and in Genesis generally מקום is always translated by τόπος, but אל בית (if it is not transliterated as Βαιθήλ) is rendered by οἶκος θεοῦ. In 35, 7 the LXX translates ויקרא למקום אל בית אל as

καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου βαιθηλ, which does not presuppose an אל before בית אל . Eissfeldt thinks that the LXX (G^D) maintains the original text and argues that the mention of the name בית אל in 31, 13 is not possible before 35, 7 where the Elohist gives the name בית אל for the first time. Moreover, the context in 35, 7 points to a place-name and not to the name of a deity. Eissfeldt says that it is a 'mechanical blunder' which crept in when J and E were combined together. The mention of בית אל in 28, 19 (J) gives the impression that the naming had already taken place in the JE compilation.[410] It is possible that בית אל was inserted as a marginal note to explain the indefinite מקום which was perhaps originally found in the text. This would have been dropped later in preference for the definite name בית אל . Moreover, it seems strange that the Elohist, who is on the whole critical of Canaanite religion and culture should use the name of the Canaanite deity בית אל as the proper name for the god of the patriarchs. The command to leave Haran is common to both J and E. The promise (J) and the reference to the vow (E) indicate the different emphasis of the two authors in the Bethel narrative.[411] This command and promise are remembered by Jacob in his prayer (31, 10. 13), but the words used there are different from the ones mentioned in this passage.

5. Gen. 32, 10. 13 (J) - The promises referred to by Jacob in his prayer.

Jacob appeals to the promises made to him by Yahweh in the time of his need.

Command followed by promise (v. 10).

'Return to your country and to your kindred
and I will do you good.'

Promise followed by Heilsschilderung (v. 13)

> 'I will indeed do you good and make your descendants as the sand of the sea which is beyond all counting.'[412]

The promise-pattern 'Imperative - Promise - Blessing' can be perceived in this passage also. Here the promise of increase is portrayed in a picturesque manner. The words are not exactly those of the promise received by Jacob himself while he was in Haran, but they are taken from the promise passages in the Abraham-Isaac narratives (22, 17 and 15, 5).

Gen. 22, 17 והרבה אתזרעך Gen. 32,13 ושמתי את־זרעך
וכחול אשר על־שפת הים כחול הים
Gen. 15, 5 וספר הכוכבים אם־תוכל לספר אתם אשר לא־יספר מרב

There is no mention of the land-promise here. It is perhaps implied in the good (טוב) which Yahweh had promised to Jacob. The Yahwist makes promise the basis of Jacob's prayer, which begins and ends with an appeal to the promises bestowed upon Jacob by God. This is an interesting extension of the idea of promise, which is now made the basis of an appeal for deliverance by the recipient of promise. Von Rad says that this is a free prayer of a layman, which is neither cultic nor poetic but is conditioned by the needs of the situation.[413] Promise forms the sure basis of the relationship between Jacob and Yahweh, so that in time of need Jacob could appeal to him directly without resorting to any cultic or magical practices.

6. Gen. 32, 23-33 - The blessing at Penuel.

The Penuel narrative is drawn around the theme of blessing. It contains very ancient elements of tradition which probably date back to pre-Israelite times,[414] especially the idea of combat with God, of

overpowering him and forcing him to confer a blessing. It was perhaps told of a hero who fought with a demon at Penuel and overcame him. Trigt considers the deity in question to be the god of the river who was believed to watch over the ford in order to prevent passage.[415] Gunkel finds the two sources J and E mixed together in this narrative.[416] According to von Rad, the whole section belongs to J and the only doublet in the narrative is that of vv. 23 and 24a.[417] Procksch reckons the whole section to belong to J.[418] Noth assigns the narrative to J but says that it is an independent cult legend interrupting the Jacob-Esau story with subsidiary aetiological functions. It has no original connexion with the Jacob-Esau story.[419] But recently Seebass has again argued for both J and E sources in this narrative. He says that the Elohist offers a sanctuary saga (vv. 26b. 30a. 31) and the Yahwist, a saga of the experience of a nomad at a threatening river (vv. 24-26a. 27-29. 30b. 32).[420]

The main problem of this narrative centres around the question of who the winner of this combat was. Vv. 26. 27 and 29 indicate that Jacob has gained a victory over the 'man', but v. 32b tells that Jacob has received a crippling blow from his opponent, so that he has to limp the next day and that this was remembered in Israel through a food taboo (v.33). Gunkel, on the other hand, argues that the ambiguous pronoun in v. 26 indicates that Jacob struck his opponent on the thigh. When Jacob realized that he could not prevail over the strength of his challenger, he resorted to a wrestler's trick[421] and struck him upon his hip socket. The opponent, now badly wounded, requests Jacob that he be allowed to go. Gunkel points out that this is even more strongly expressed in Hos. 12, 5a, 'He fought with an angel and overcame <u>him</u>, <u>he</u> weeping,[422] prayed for grace' (both pronouns refer to the angel).[423] Ackroyd says that this is grammatically possible but that the real point lies here in Jacob obtaining a blessing.[424]

The fact that it is Jacob who limps after the fight makes it difficult to accept Gunkel's interpretation. Later Gunkel himself seems to have changed his view and suggests that Jacob is the one who is wounded but who yet held his ground and forced a blessing from the deity.[425] Eising considers the injury to be a sign of verification for the actuality of the experience and, at the same time, also of the blessing obtained by Jacob,[426] but the verification of blessing would be expected through well-being, not through physical injury. Elliger supposes that Jacob is the hopeless loser according to v. 29 and thinks that שרה contains a negative judgement of Jacob.[427] But the name Israel connected with שרה is considered to be an honourable name in the present context and as such Elliger's interpretation of שרה is not possible.[428] Gunkel's second interpretation seems to be the most plausible one, namely, that Jacob is hurt by the touch of the deity but yet held his ground and compelled him to confer a blessing. Similarly, Trigt says that the most important emphasis of the story is the tenacity of Jacob in that, despite the fact that his hip was dislocated, he did not release his opponent but continued to grapple with him. It is this tenacity in holding on to Yahweh against all odds that characterizes Jacob throughout the narratives about him. Trigt comments that this tenacity is characteristic of the people of Israel in the course of their history.[429]

The blessing in this narrative is given through the change of the name of Jacob into Israel. Seebass points out that the change of name (32, 28-29a) is secondarily introduced into the narrative from the solemn declaration in 35, 10, which he attributes to the Elohist, against the common view that it belongs to P.[430] Seebass argues that the root שרה does not play any sufficiently significant role in the narrative to enable the name 'Israel' to be derived from it. On the other hand, he points out that אבק plays an important role in the course of the narrative.

It refers to the fight, יאבק (v. 25), בהאבקו (v. 26) and harmonizes with the names of Jacob יעקב (v. 23) and the river Jabbok יבק (v. 22). He suggests that originally v. 29 read כי יאבקו אלהים ואנשים עמך ותוכל instead of the present כי שרית עם־אלהים ואנשים ותוכל.[431] But it may be asked why the more obvious word would have been replaced by a word which is in no way connected with the narrative.[432] There is also a considerable doubt about the attribution of 35, 10 to E and about its priority with respect to the story in 32, 23ff. Gen. 35, 10 is generally attributed to P,[433] and in 35,10 the new name is arbitrarily stated, whereas in 32, 23ff., it forms an integral part of the narrative and is introduced to release the situation of tension in which Jacob is placed. The fact that a new word is used here is perhaps significant as the harder reading. Gross points out that P had apparently the Penuel narrative before him and that he imitated it in writing his account in 35, 10.[434] This makes 32, 29b (JE) the first to change the name of Jacob into Israel. The Elohist records the change of the name of God in Ex. 3, 4f., and this is followed by P in Ex. 6, 4. P also records the change of the names of Abraham (17, 5), Sarah (17, 15) and Jacob (35, 10). No change of name is reported in the Yahwistic account. In this respect Gen. 32, 29 could belong to the Elohist. According to Trigt, Vriezen attributes the whole passage to E for two reasons : (a) The use of the name אלהים in vv. 29 and 31, and (b) Gen. 32, 23ff., is parallel to Gen. 20 (E) and probably comes from a setting characterized by the patriarchal cult.[435] Moreover, the giving of a new name in response to a request for blessing is perhaps to be attributed to the Elohist, who tries to avoid the word 'blessing' because of its association with magic and with Canaanite fertility religion. This is in keeping with the Elohist's negative attitude towards Canaan, its religion and its culture. J's story reads well from verse 27-30, where the narrator records the fact that God blessed Jacob in response to the latter's insistence.

The name Israel

The name 'Israel' is mentioned in the Merneptah stone[436] and is also attested in the Ugaritic texts.[437] The change of name here not only has symbolic signifiance, but also indicates a change in the destiny of the recipient.[438] It points to the future glory of the nation Israel. After the analogy of יְרֻחַמְאֵל , יִשְׁמְעֵאל , יִזְרְעֵאל , Gunkel suggests that יִשְׂרָאֵל means 'El fights'. Eissfeldt points out that the change of the name Jacob into Israel indicates the transfer of allegiance on the part of the tribe of Jacob, originally domiciled in the Syrian-Arabian desert or in Mesopotamia, to the El of Canaan.[439] They acknowledged this deity (Gen. 33, 20 אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [440]) and also changed their own name into one which witnessed to the majesty of El יִשְׂרָאֵל.[441] Danell, on the other hand, suggests that the name 'Israel' belongs to the west-Jordan area, especially Shechem, that 'Jacob' belongs to the east-Jordan area, later becoming associated with Bethel, and that both these traditions are joined together by the change of the name.[442] Seebass, following Danell, proposes two separate fathers, Israel and Jacob. These two fathers were identified with each other because they both had similar traditions about the immigration into Canaan and the land-promise.[443] Maag identifies two separate fathers connected with two gods of the fathers, רְעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל connected with Israel and אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב with Jacob and argues that these 'gods of the fathers' belonged to the nomadic stage of the pre-Israelite tribes.[444] It is interesting to note here that the deity אֵל , who is a Canaanite god, is connected with Penuel which is outside Canaan to the east of Jordan, but it could perhaps be explained on the grounds that the El of the land had attempted to prevent Jacob from entering into his own land. Eissfeldt points out that El is elsewhere associated with events outside Palestine in the patriarchal narratives.[445]

Another major problem connected with this passage is its relation to the passage in Hos. 12, 4ff. Trigt points out that the expressions בבטן and באון in v. 4 represent two important phases in the life of Jacob and suggests that the fight with the אלהים, according to Hos. 12, 4ff., should perhaps be placed at the beginning of Jacob's life and connected with his visit to Bethel while on his way to Paddan Aram, not with his return journey. This is supported by the fact that P associates the change of name with Bethel and not with Penuel. However, he thinks that Hosea's connecting of the combat with Bethel before Jacob's arrival at Paddan Aram may be due to an oratorical technique whereby Hosea groups together scenes whose contents have close affinity with each other, rather than due to an adherance to historical sequence.[446] Jacob's imploring for grace with weeping is a new feature in Hos. 12, 5 not found in Gen. 32, 23-33, and de Boer suggests that it may be connected with the Bethel cultic rite reflected in the אלון בכות associated with Bethel in Gen. 35, 8.[447] Bentzen, on the other hand, argues that Jacob's weeping is similar to the fasting of Moses (Deut. 9, 9-10, 11), whereby Jacob employs all the usual ways of imploring for blessing and conquers God. Thus, Bentzen maintains that Hosea's account is the same as the one represented in Gen. 32.[448]

עם-אלהים ועם-אנשים : Von Rad suggests that this is an expression for a superlative, similar to the one in Judges 9, 9. 13 אלהים ואנשים .[449] Similarly, Honeyman considers this to be a 'merismus' and translates 'all sentient and rational beings'.[450] Trigt, in agreement with Skinner, suggests that there may originally have been a fuller account of traditions in which Jacob figured as the hero of many fights and finally proves successful in this combat with a deity.[451] The statement following the change of name כי שרית עם-אלהים ועם-אנשים ותוכל

could be understood as a promise by taking the perfect as perfectum confidentiae.[452] 'For you strive with the mighty ones and yet[453] you prevail'. It is a promise that Jacob would be victorious[454] however superior his opponents might be, - a promise not altogether inappropriate to one who waits in trepidation to meet his brother whom he had previously deceived.

The following chapter tells how he overcame his odds. After this glorious promise it is surprising to see that Jacob does not overcome Esau but submits to him. It is a different kind of triumph. Westermann comments on this submission and says that the relationship of blessing and grace is drawn out in this story with profound theological significance so that the one who is blessed is given the grace to submit to the unblessed one, whereby enmity is removed and reconciliation is brought about. A similar motif is indicated by the Yahwist in the Abraham-Lot story (Gen. 13). This profound theological significance is not explicitly stated but is simply brought about in the course of the story. Here theology is digested in the event.[455] Blessing and promise are given within the context of strife in this narrative.

7. Gen. 35, 9-13 - The Priestly narrative of the promise to Jacob

There is general agreement amongst scholars that this section belongs to the Priestly document,[456] except for Seebass who attributes it to the Elohistic source.[457] The main characteristics of P can, however, be noted in this section : אלהים before Ex. 6, 4f., (vv. 9. 10. 11); the name of the deity אל שדי (v. 11); פרה ורבה (v. 11); קהל גוים (v.11); מלכים as in 17, 6 P; the change of name in v. 10 as in 17, 6, and the conclusion in v. 13a ויעל מעליו אברהם which is equivalent to ויעל אלהים מעל אברהם in 17, 22b P. Von Rad says that vv. 9-13 contain everything which the P document had to say about Jacob. But to

this should be added Israel's blessing of Jacob in 28, 1-9. The blessing in 28, 3-4 is almost identical with the promise here in 35, 11-12. Von Rad does not seem to take note of this when he says that 35, 9-13 summarizes in essence what is theologically important from 28, 10ff., (JE) and 32, 23ff.; (J) the promise of the land and the change of name.[458] Similarly Gunkel also suggested that 35, 11-12 is simply the Bethel tradition of promise already contained in Gen. 28, 13-14.[459] Skinner also says that 35, 11-13 is parallel to 28, 10ff.[460] But a close examination of 35, 11-12 shows that it is almost identical with P's marriage blessing in 28, 3-4.

28, 3-4	35, 11-12
ואל שדי יברך אתך ויפרך וירבך	ויאמר לו אלהים אני
והיית לקהל עמים: ויתן־לך את־ברכת	אל שדי פרה ורבה גוי
אברהם לך ולזרעך אתך לרשתך את־ארץ	וקהל גוים יהיה ממך ומלכים
מגוריך אשר־נתן אלהים לאברהם	ממלציך יצאו: ואת־הארץ אשר נתתי
	לאברהם וליצחק לך אתננה
	ולזרעך אחריך אתן את־הארץ

The change of name in 35, 10 is connected with the Penuel tradition. Thus P connects the marriage blessing (28, 3-4) and the Penuel blessing together with the change of name (32, 23ff.) and omits the Bethel tradition (28, 10ff.,J). However, he locates his own account in Bethel. The Bethel promise in J is thereby interpreted as the marriage blessing.

Certain other difficulties have been noted in the promise passage (35, 9-12) : (1) It is very unnatural to find two consecutive verses (10 and 11) beginning with ויאמר לו אלהים and both introducing God's speeches; this indicates that they probably belong to different traditions (2) The self-introduction of God (v. 11) comes after the first divine speech and the change of name in vv. 9-10. The obvious thing would be to have the self-introductory formula at the beginning of the section where it appears in P's narrative of Abraham (17,1). (3) עוד

in v. 9 indicates that it is the second passage and not the first one. Moreover, the marriage tradition (v. 11) should come before the Penuel tradition (v. 10). (4) The command to be fruitful and to multiply (פרה ורבה) would be suitable during Jacob's journey to Paddan Aram but does not seem to be appropriate at the time of the return journey. Jacob had already had all his children except Benjamin, whom Rachel was expecting at that time . (5) The change of name is not reported in 48, 3f., where P cites this passage. Gunkel thinks that the change of name in v. 10 was the work of the redactor of the whole of the Pentateuch (R^{JEP}), who conflated the Bethel tradition and the Penuel tradition in order to hold them together.[461] Von Rad also thinks that the change of name in P has been added secondarily and comments that P is not usually concerned with the etymology of names.[464] But he seems to change his mind in his commentary when he says that the change of name must have been followed by an etymology corresponding to that of 17,5 but that it has been suppressed by the redactor, perhaps because it contradicted the explanation of the name in 32, 28.[463] The change of the names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17, 5. 15) and later of the name of God from אל שדי to יהוה (Ex. 6,3) makes it possible that the change of name in 35,10, together with the marriage blessing (vv. 11-12), belongs to P, but that these have been transposed. Skinner, commenting on this, says that no adequate reason can be imagined for the dislocation of the text in this passage.[464] Perhaps three reasons may, however, be suggested to explain this transposition : (a) The redactor must have found it odd that the self-introduction of God (vv. 11-12) should immediately precede the change of name (vv. 9-10), which, in the original JE tradition, records the refusal of the deity to disclose his name. Therefore he has put the section containing the self-disclosure (vv. 11-12) after the change of Jacob's name (vv. 9-10). (b) The author wanted to emphasize the

importance of blessing (v. 9 וַיְבָרֶךְ) and to show that the promise is a later extension of the original blessing. He saw the change of name, the promise of posterity and land stemming from the blessing which Jacob had received from God. This is precisely the way in which P's story of Jacob begins in 28, 3-4, with an invocation of Yahweh and a wish that the blessing of Abraham may be granted to Jacob. (3) עוֹד in v. 9, which originally followed v. 12, was allowed to stand at the beginning of the section since it now follows 35, 1-8 where Jacob has already received a revelation from God and has acted in obedience to it.

(a) <u>The change of Jacob's name (vv. 9-10)</u>

> And God appeared to Jacob again, when he returned from Paddan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob, your name shall not be called Jacob again, but your name shall be Israel', and he called his name Israel.

The idea of blessing and the change of name are connected with the Penuel narrative. But even after this change of name, P still continues to use the name Jacob. It occurs seven times in the verses that immediately follow this passage (vv. 14. 15. 22b-27). The same is the case with the JE narrative after 32, 28ff. Whereas P is very careful in other instances of the change name, this change does not seem to have made any impression upon him. In the case of Abraham and Sarah, he uses the new names after Gen. 17 and this is also adhered to by J and E and is observed even in Gen. 14. Similarly, P does not employ the divine name יהוה until Ex. 6,3, nor does the Elohist use it till Ex. 3,14. Only in the case of Jacob is the old name repeated after the new one is conferred. Gunkel and von Rad suggest that the change of name in v. 10 is a later interpolation. But the tendency of P in Gen. 17 and Ex. 6,3 probably

speaks for the change of Jacob's name here also in P. Key observes that in cases where P has an account of the giving of a name which is parallel to J or E, the bestowing of the name is repeated but not the explanation.[465] This is precisely the case in this passage, where P is using the Penuel tradition and thus does not give an explanation of the new name in so far as such an explanation is already found in 32, 29. It is strange that neither JE nor P nor the editor seem to be consistent about the change of the name of Jacob into Israel. This fact may perhaps indicate that the Jacob and the Israel traditions were originally independent, connected with different patriarchs and that in spite of this change of the name, their traditions still continued to be handed down separately although already implying that the two are identical. This view is advocated by Seebass, Maag and Andersen, who see separate fathers in the Jacob-Israel traditions.[466]

(b) The divine promise to Jacob (vv. 11-12)

This section may be divided as follows : (i) The self-introduction of the deity and the command - v. 11a (ii) The Heilsschilderung about the promise of posterity - v. 11b and (iii) The promise of land - v. 12

(i) The self-introduction of the deity and the command (v. 11a)

> And God said to him, 'I am El Shaddai, be fruitful and multiply.'

Here the imperative is connected with פרה and רבה , words which are used in the creation blessing (Gen. 1, 28) and in the Noahic blessing (Gen. 9, 7). The promise is given as a blessing-command. As the first man in creation and Noah after the flood, so also the first father of the nation Israel is blessed by God. Immediately after this P gives the names of the children of Jacob (35, 23ff.) and emphasizes thereby that Israel came into existence through God's special blessing of their father.

פרה ורבה : Blessing given as a command is an extension of the original wish-blessing into a divine, creative command. The divine self-introductory formula and the divine command are followed by blessing and promise as in the other patriarchal promises.

(ii) The Heilsschilderung about the promise of posterity (v. 11b)

> 'A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring forth from you.'

The future glorious state of salvation is described in terms of nations and kings who will descend from the patriarch.[467] This verse is almost identical with 17, 6 where, too, 'kings' are mentioned. קהל גוים refers to the cultic community of the descendants of Jacob spread throughout the world in the period of the Exile.[468]

(iii) The promise of land (v. 12)

> 'And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.'

Gunkel considers את־הארץ אתן (v. 12c) to be an addition.[469] Holzinger comments that it is out of place 'even allowing for P's loquacity'.[470] But Vink argues that this special mention of the land as a divine gift could be justified as part of P, if the Priestly code is understood as the expression of and the preparation for a new Landnahme.[471] Here again, blessing and promise are connected with journey reports, which are the original contexts in which these are narrated both in P (28, 1-10) and in JE (32, 23ff.).

CONCLUSION

A survey of the blessing and promise passages in the patriarchal narratives shows that whereas the theme of blessing is closely connected with the narrative and differs from passage to passage, the theme of promise emerges with a definite pattern of its own. It begins with a command in the imperative or with an Heilsorakel (אל תירא), it is then followed by promise - and blessing-concepts and finally concludes with a comment about the obedient response of the patriarch and about the wider implications of blessing and promise. This pattern is found in J and P, but 'blessing' is either omitted or transformed in the Elohistic source. The three main characteristics, command, promise and blessing, represent the three main cultural and religious sources from which the religion of Israel developed. The command represents the Sinai tradition, the promise is connected with the pre-Israelite nomadic tribes, while blessing originates from Canaanite religion and culture.[472] The promise-tradition incorporates all these elements into it. Thus the promise tradition in the patriarchal narratives reflects the syncretistic tensions and influences of one religion upon the other, and yet all these elements are connected in terms of the special revelation of God to Israel and of the mission which this privilege lays upon the nation Israel.[473] The fact that the blessing-stories are closely associated with the narrative structure and are not constructed in relation to a pattern like that of the theme of promise, perhaps points to the priority of the idea of blessing in the patriarchal narratives. The promise pattern, on the other hand, perhaps points to its later theological development. The aversion of the Elohist to the theme of blessing is in keeping with his negative attitude towards Canaan, its culture and its religion, to which this theme originally belongs.[474]

Blessings and promises are given in at least four different contexts in the patriarchal narratives : (1) strife,[475] (2) death of the father,[476] (3) marriage[477] and (4) journey. In each of these different situations it was probably blessings which were given in the original traditions, and these blessingswere later expanded and changed into divine promises. The different contexts would perhaps account for the repetition of promise in the patriarchal narratives. Each specific situation of need created a tension which was led towards a solution by the declaration of an appropriate promise. Later these specific promises connected with specific situations were combined together into a promise-complex and used in different contexts, in order to indicate the sufficiency of the divine promise not only in meeting specific needs but also in providing for all the needs of man. This may well be the reason for the occurence of the different promises grouped together into one promise, even though some of them are not necessarily related to the specific need situations of the narratives.[478] The idea of promise itself is enlarged by its association with the ideas of covenant, oath, command and law.

(1) <u>The strife motif</u> is found in the narratives of all three patriarchs, Abraham and Lot (13), Abraham and Abimelech (21), Abraham and the Hittites in connexion with the purchase of Machpelah (23),[479] Isaac and Abimelech (26), Isaac and Ishmael (21; 25), Jacob and Esau, and Jacob and Laban (25-32). All of these narratives are connected with the problem of the adjustment of the pre-Israelite tribes with the settled people of the land in connection with the rights to wells and pastures. The promise of land and the promise of overcoming the enemy would belong to these narratives. But the possession of the land is not envisaged as arising from the destruction of the neighbouring peoples but as a result of the sheer increase of numbers.[480]

(2) The dying father motif is portrayed in detail in Gen. 27 and 48. Isaac blesses Jacob and Esau, and later Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph. But in cases where there is no account of such a blessing by a dying father, the divine blessing or promise is introduced by the narrator.[481] Speiser points out that the last wish of a dying father was protected by law at Nuzi.[482] The blessing of the dying father has no legal implication in Genesis, and this perhaps points to the fact that the blessing by the dying father in Genesis belongs to an earlier stage than that represented in the Nuzi texts. The patriarchal narratives show that a custom of blessing existed amongst the pre-Israelite tribes. The blessings of Jacob (Gen. 49) and the blessings of Moses (Deut. 33) also belong to this motif.[483]

(3) The marriage motif is found in the Yahwist's story of Rebekah, where the members of her household bless her as she leaves home to marry Isaac. P also gives an account of a marriage blessing in 28, 1-9, where Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to marry a girl from his mother's people. The Priestly writer indicates that Esau also was anxious to have the good wishes of his parents, with the result that he marries an Ishmaelite woman to please them. There is a reference to such a custom of a marriage blessing in the Keret epic from Ugarit. At the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, the father blesses the bridegroom, and later the guests also bless them. The main content of this blessing is fertility and increased posterity.[484] Fruitfulness and increase are appropriate in the context of a marriage blessing. Westermann points out the close connexion between blessing and the promise of increase. There are several passages in the patriarchal narratives in which the promise of increase immediately follows the word 'blessing' (Gen. 17, 16. 20; 22,16; 26,24; 28,3f.; 32,13; 35, 9-12; 48, 3f. 16). Blessing always stands first, and increase is then given

as a consequence of blessing.[485] The marriage blessing is similar to God's promise to a childless couple (Gen. 17,18). Blessing is also related to the promise of land. Blessing results in increased posterity, which in turn raises the problem of living space, and this tension is released by the promise of land.

(4) The journey motif is also introduced in connection with all three patriarchs. A blessing or promise is given at the commencement of a journey. Abraham receives promises and blessing before he sets out on his journey to Canaan (12, 1-3; 15); Isaac receives promises and blessing as he moves to Gerar (26, 3-4. 24). So does Jacob at Bethel while on his way to Paddan Aram (28, 12-15) and later at Penuel on his return journey (32, 23ff.). He again receives promises as he goes to Egypt (46, 3-4). The main promise in this connection is that of protection on the way. This is expressed by the promise that God will be with the patriarch. The words אהיה עמך appear in these journey promises and these are very appropriate to nomadic culture and religion. The deity is believed to move with his people and to guide them on their way.

These different promises and blessings, given in different circumstances, were later enlarged to include wider contexts and new historical situations. The promises were perhaps originally blessing wishes for well-being but were later extended into promises in order to avoid the primitive magical ideas connected with the concept of blessing. In the four groups mentioned above, blessing is closely connected to the various contexts, but these blessings have now been enlarged into promises.

S E C T I O N - III : The theme of Promise in relation to culture, religion and theology.

1. Promise within the context of the meeting of cultures and religions

The patriarchal narratives preserve a memory of the nomadic origins of the pre-Israelite tribes prior to their settlement in the land of Canaan. All three sources are agreed that they had come from outside of Palestine. The Yahwist tells how Abraham had received his call and promises outside Canaan and how he had obeyed the call and journeyed to Canaan (12, 1-4a; 15, 7). This is again referred to in Abraham's speech to his chief steward (24, 7). Similarly, the Elohist refers to it in Abraham's speech to Abimelech, where Abraham says that God had caused him to wander from his father's house (20, 13). The Priestly writer also indicates that the patriarchs had come from outside of Canaan in his special phrase for Palestine as the אֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵיהֶם (17, 8; 28, 4) and in the account of Isaac sending Jacob to Paddan Aram to marry amongst his own people (28, 1-7). The little creed in Deut. 26, 5 refers to the Aramaean origins of the patriarchs, and so also Jos. 24, 2, which points to the Mesopotamian origin of the patriarchs. Thus all the traditions agree that the patriarchs had come from outside of Canaan.

Albrecht Alt has emphasized the nomadic origins of the patriarchs and their later immigration into the Kulturland, in his essay, 'The God of the Fathers'. The patriarchal deities are different from the local numina of Palestine in that they are not bound to a place but move with their worshippers, guiding and protecting them. The Canaanite deities, on the other hand, are bound to a place. The patriarchal deities are named after the ancestors of the tribes who had received revelations of these gods

who are designated 'gods of the fathers' in the patriarchal narratives. Alt found parallels to such a religion in the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions.[1] This hypothesis has been generally accepted, with certain alterations, by most subsequent writers.[2] Noth accepts Alt's hypothesis and describes the patriarchs as land-hungry semi-nomads, living on the edges of the arable land, seeking an opportunity to settle down in Canaan.[3] Similarly von Rad also follows Alt in emphasizing the nomadic origin of the patriarchs and their religion of the 'gods of the fathers'.[4] This view is also accepted by those who do not agree with the traditio-historical method of Alt and Noth, in particular by the American scholars Albright, Bright and Wright, who provide archaeological evidence from the second millennium B.C., with regard to the names, laws and customs of the nomadic peoples mentioned in the Mari texts which are similar to those attributed to the patriarchs in the Genesis stories. These scholars, on the basis of archaeological materials, argue for the historicity of the patriarchs.[5] Noth, on the other hand, finds no evidence in these materials for ascertaining the historicity of the patriarchs, though he is prepared to consider the pre-Israelite tribes as proto-Aramaeans, similar to those mentioned in the Mari texts.[6] There is a great debate about the historicity of the patriarchs between the traditio-historical school and the archaeol-ogical school, but both are agreed on one fact, namely that the patriarchs and their religion had come from outside Palestine, from a nomadic way of life. Further, although there is discussion as to whether they were cattle-breeding nomads, camel nomads, ass nomads or wandering merchants, no one doubts their nomadic origin.[7]

These nomadic tribes settled in the hill country in Canaan which was not thickly populated. Thus the settlement of Canaan was peaceful and did not involve conflict with the settled peoples of the land.[8] Haran argues that the El sanctuaries were not Canaanite, but Israelite centres

which they had established on the edges of the Canaanite towns. Although it is not possible to agree with Haran's conclusions about El-religion belonging to the nomadic tribes and brought from outside Canaan, his observation that the patriarchs had settled in the hill country away from the Canaanite towns is valid.[9] These tribes gradually took over the Canaanite sancturaries and established the worship of the gods of the fathers in these sanctuaries. Alt notes very briefly the localization of the gods of the fathers at the Canaanite sanctuaries and says that the ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the local Canaanite sanctuaries were transferred to the patriarchs. But Alt does not diccuss the problem connected with such an association of the nomadic gods with the Elim of the settled peoples.[10] The nomadic deities had different characteristics from those of the local deities of Canaan. The needs of nomadic life determined the conception of God amongst the nomads, and, similarly, the necessities of the settled way of life determined the ideas of God amongst the sedentary peoples. The transition from a nomadic way of life to a settled way of life would lead to a change in the conception of God in terms of new circumstances and needs, but there is a general tendency to emphasize the nomadic conception of God without taking into account the enormous change which Canaanite religion had wrought upon it. Forinstance, Eichrodt rejects the opinion that the environment in Canaan made a positive contribution to Israelite culture and religion and says that Canaanite religion exerted more a disintegrative than a constructive force in Israelite religion.[11] Gunkel, in spite of his wide religio-historical perspective, does not consider that anything of value has been contributed to the patriarchal narratives by Canaanite culture. He says that the patriarchal stories were essentially ancient Hebrew stories in origin and that Canaan did not exert any influence upon them.[12] Brinker notes changes that the settlement had brought about among the Hebrew nomadic tribes but says that the Canaanite

element was disruptive in its influence.[13] Moscati also finds Canaanite religion inferior to nomadic religion and feels that the former had effected no positive influence upon the latter.[14]

The discovery of the Ras Shamra texts in ancient Ugarit has thrown new light upon Canaanite culture and religion, and, as a result, there has been a more sympathetic appraisal of Canaanite religion and its contribution to Israelite culture and religion. Engnell calls for a fresh approach to Canaanite religion, not in terms of the popular religion connected with the בעלים , but in terms of the official cult-religion localized at the great sanctuaries in Canaan, which, he believes, had exerted a major influence upon Israelite religion, cult and theology, especially with regard to the ideas of messianism, resurrection and sacral kingship.[15] Eissfeldt, too, emphasizes the influence of Canaanite El-religion upon patriarchal religion. He elaborates further the Canaanite stage of patriarchal nomadic religion and argues that there was a complete assimilation of nomadic religion into Canaanite El-religion. He finds that even the patriarchal promises are reported as having been given by the El-deities of Canaan, promises which Alt had attributed to the nomadic deities, the gods of the fathers.[16] Eissfeldt also describes the opposition of the Rechabites and other representatives of nomadic culture to such an assimilation and to such enthusiastic appraisal of Canaan and its culture by the Yahwist.[17] Similarly, Fohrer has a positive assessment of Canaanite culture and religion in its influence upon early Israelite religion. He points out that there was a total assimilation of pre-Israelite nomadic religion into Canaanite religion which brought about a refinement of the idea of God. The narrow particularistic views of nomadic religion were enlarged by the universalism of Canaanite religion. The Canaanite idea of God as the creator of heaven and earth was taken over by later Yahwism. Like Eissfeldt, Fohrer also notes that there was strong opposition to

this Canaanite influence from conservative groups such as Rechabites and Nazirites and says that it was good that they did not ultimately succeed, otherwise Israelite religion would not have developed into such an elevated religion.[18] Hammershaimb observes that even the idea of Yahweh as the father of the fatherless, judge of the widow and protector of the defenceless, had come from the Canaanite idea of God.[19] The idea of the righteousness of God, which is so important in the theology of the prophets, is also perhaps taken over from Canaanite religion.[20]

The whole discussion about the meeting of the nomadic and the settled peoples, of their cultures and their religions, is particularly relevant to the understanding of the idea of promise in the patriarchal narratives, because 'promise' as given by God is determined by the nature of the deity who confers it and also by the circumstances of the people amongst whom this deity is worshipped. Maag makes a clear distinction between the religion of the nomads and the religion of the settled peoples. The religion of the nomad is a religion of promise. It is the religion of a migratory people who live not in a cyclic pattern of life rotating between sowing and harvest, as do the sedentary people, but who move from place to place and experience event as a progress rather than as something to be left behind. Event is understood as history which binds the present to the future, and the summons of God to move forward is conceived of as being pregnant with future. Thus promise is an essential feature of nomadic religion. God is understood not as a king but as a leader and shepherd leading and guiding his people. The nomadic deity, the 'god of the fathers', never appears under the image or title of a king but only appears as shepherd and leader who guides his people. The idea of divine kingship comes from Canaanite religion.[21] In contrast to this progressive promise religion with its kinetic-vectoral elements, Canaanite religion, according to Maag, is static, with a cyclic, repetitive view of history and the

deity is bound to a place. Maag notes that there was a syncretistic tension between these two types of religion during the period of settlement, but that the nomadic religion eventually completely superseded the religion of the Kulturland.[22]

Koehler also draws attention to the problem presented by the transition of the pre-Israelite tribes from a cattle-breeding, nomadic way of life to settled agricultural life. The needs connected with the nomadic way of life are those of guidance and protection. The shepherds in their movement from place to place in search of new pastures needed the protection of their gods from dangers on the way. This protection was periodic, as and when the people were faced with enemies or were endangered by hunger and thirst. When these tribes settled in the Kulturland and took to agriculture, there arose new needs, which required not periodic protection and guidance but continued support, power of fertility, strength for growth and development of crops, cattle and human beings. This required the blessing power of God to ensure continued strengthening and empowering men and land. Thus the Canaanite concept of blessing by the deity was transferred to the nomadic god.[23] Hempel describes this process as a change from a religion of the people to a religion of the place, from tent to house and from pasture economy to that of the culture of vine and corn.

The farmer longs for gifts from his god different from those which the nomad or semi-nomad expects from his, and thus with the settlement of the nomadic tribes, the functions of the Canaanite gods were transferred to the nomadic gods.[24] Similarly, Westermann notes a change taking place in the idea of God in early Israelite religion after the settlement of the pre-Israelite nomadic tribes in Canaan. The idea of God going in front, showing the way and guiding, gives place to the idea of the enthroned deity who dwells in one place, and the idea of a periodic delivering activity of god is now understood as the continuing blessing activity of God.

The idea of 'blessing' had originally nothing to do with the idea of 'promise,' but the two were linked by the Yahwist in order to give a historical dimension to the unhistorical idea of blessing, which was associated with magical and mythical ideas.[25] Schottroff examines the ancient near eastern materials relating to 'blessing' and comes to the conclusion that the concept belongs to nomadic culture, and yet he concedes that it attained far-reaching signifiance once Israel had settled in the arable land. Further, Schottroff makes a subtle distinction between the nomadic idea of blessing and the idea of blessing in the settled land. Among nomadic people, both 'blessing' and 'curse' are connected with the community, whereas amongst sedentary people, blessing is connected with land and fertility. Thus the concept of 'blessing' in the patriarchal narratives could still be attributed to Canaan, in so far as it is connected with the promise of land and fertility. The patriarchal promise, being primarily that of descendants and land, could have originated in the land of Canaan.[26]

In this encounter between nomadic and sedentary cultures, the contribution of the nomadic idea of God providing a historical perspective to the entire history of salvation together with a progressive and dynamic view of life orientated to the future has been emphasized in contrast to the cyclic and magical characteristics of blessing. But the patriarchal narratives do not hesitate to employ this concept while rejecting the magical and mythical ideas connected with it. It may be asked why this idea of blessing was taken over from Canaanite religion in spite of its static view of life and its magical associations. The fact that the Yahwist is prepared to use it, even to the extent of over-emphasizing it (the root ברך is repeated five times in 12, 1-3,[27] and recurs again and again in the promise passages), perhaps indicates that he had found in this concept positive elements which were present neither in the pre-

Canaanite religion of the 'gods of the father', nor in the later Yahwism which was brought by groups that had come from Egypt. This would perhaps explain his positive attitude towards Canaanite culture and religion.[28]

The idea of promise arising out of nomadic culture and religion, is not without its own limitations. The nomadic god promised new pastures and guidance for shepherd clans living in the steppe and led them from place to place. This god, who is obliged to lead his worshippers from place to place for their Lebensmittel, is never described as having powers to create means of livelihood for his people in one place. This would also perhaps account for the fact that he is not attached to one place. He could only guide and lead in search of new pastures and watering places but could not provide them in the place where his worshippers had lived. It is interesting to note that this deity also moves along with his worshippers into the arable land and settles down in the local Canaanite sanctuaries. The idea of God as creator is definitely associated with Canaanite El-religion, and the Israelite God is credited with creative powers only after the Landnahme. The Canaanite deity אל עליון of Salem is addressed as the creator of heaven and earth.[29] (14, 19). On the other hand, the Canaanite El, bound to a place, has no need to move from that place, since he has creative powers, nor is it necessary for him to lead his people in search of Lebensmittel. Thus the peculiarity of the Canaanite El, limited to a place, is not a sign of his weakness but a proof of his creative powers. The little creed in Deut. 26, 5f., emphasizes the hazardous conditions in which the patriarch had lived before the settlement and celebrates with great joy the harvest of the fruits of the land. The association of the gods of the fathers with the local Elim was the point at which the attributes of blessing and powers of creation were accorded to them and later to Yahweh.

Canaanite religion has been described by Maag as static[30] in comparison with the more progressive nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers.' Ahlström has already objected to this evaluation of Canaanite El-religion.[31] Maag's assessment is based on the observation that this deity does not move from place to place, but a more impressive concept of an inner movement and growth could be perceived in the idea of creativity associated with this deity, who is considered to be the source of fertility, growth, development and maturity. The growth of a plant into a tree, the bloom of a bud into a flower, the birth of a child and its development into manhood, growth into maturity and old age, are all seen as aspects of the creative activity of this god. This creative power must have appeared as a great miracle to the nomads coming from the desert with all the hazards connected with such a life of wandering, and this must have led them to merge their religion entirely with that of the Canaanite Elim.[32] The Yahwist himself is prepared to associate Yahweh with these El-gods who had already been associated with the 'gods of the fathers', to the extent that he wipes out all differences between the nomadic-Canaanite religions and Yahwism. Thus he equates the nomadic 'gods of the fathers' and the local Elim with Yahweh. Gressmann has argued that the designation 'El' was already associated with the gods of the fathers during the nomadic period of the pre-Israelite tribes, before their entry into Palestine.[33] But Baudissin has rightly rejected this view and says that Gressmann's argument is not convincing, because he bases his theory on the fact that 'El' appears in association with the names which are found in Genesis, while the name Baal does not. Baudissin emphasizes the Canaanite origin of the name 'EL', which was associated with the 'gods of the fathers' in Canaan.[34] Schmidt also argues that the 'gods of the fathers' were first named 'El' in the course of their encounter with the Kulturlandreligion.[35]

It is possible that there was an uncritical assimilation of the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' into Canaanite El-religion, so that the Canaanite El traditions were transferred to the 'gods of the fathers' and to the ancestors of the immigrating tribes. This could be called the first Cannanite stage when all that was Canaanite had been taken over by the settling nomads. The advanced culture of the Canaanite people, their cultic ceremonies and furnished sanctuaries must have attracted the simple nomads, so that they took over the local traditions and transferred them to their ancestors and equated their 'gods of the fathers' with the local Elim. Schmidt points out that a majority of the patriarchal stories were derived from the Kulturland.[37] Thus blessing, which is the main feature of Canaanite religion, became the theme of the patriarchal traditions. The narratives in Genesis read very well as blessing stories without the promise passages, so much so that von Rad refers to some of them as link passages which were first formulated by the Yahwist in order to connect the tradition blocks.[38] Hoftijzer considers all the promise passages to be secondary additions except Gen. 15 and 17, which alone he says are original promise traditions.[39] The influence of blessing can still be perceived in the patriarchal narratives in spite of the fact that they have been enlarged and transformed to suit new contexts and are now made to express different theological opinions by the authors of the different sources.

(1) There is an exclusive concern with the family, its problems and tensions in relation to the birth of children, living space and support of the family. The family is the area within which blessing operates.[40]

(2) The stories lead from blessing to its unfolding. This is especially prominent in the east-Jordan Jacob stories, where the events are narrated as an unfolding of blessing, rather than as a fulfilment of promise. Blessing, conferred at the beginning of the patriarch's life, is seen

unfolding during his life-time. Jacob's story begins with an account of blessing (Gen. 27), and the rest of his life is connected with problems and successes connected with it. There is no initial blessing to Abraham from his father, but it is given in the call passage (Gen. 12, 1-3). Similarly there is no account of Abraham blessing Isaac, but the narrator takes care to introduce it by saying that God blessed Isaac after the death of Abraham. (25, 11).[41]

(3) There is special emphasis on the fruitfulness of both land and men regarded as the result of blessing. Westermann calls attention to the idea of increase and descendants connected with the root ברך in the patriarchal narratives.[42] Blessing is the power which brings about the increase of posterity.

(4) The repetitive character of the patriarchal stories reflects a cyclic view of history which is the view connected with blessing. The repetition of similar events in the lives of the patriarchs is no cause for embarrassment to the narrators. On the contrary, they seem to accept this phenomenon quite happily. For example the endangering of the ancestress and the wife-sister motif are narrated with reference to both Abraham and Isaac. The barren wife motif is told in connexion with all the patriarchs. The patriarchal stories themselves are told in the form of cycles from birth to death and burial. The blessing given at the beginning is unfolded during the patriarch's life time and is repeated again in the life of his heir.

(5) The repetition of the theme of 'promise' in different circumstances perhaps points to an originally blessing orientated scheme into which 'promise' has been secondarily introduced. Blessings could be seen as given to the patriarchs in different situations, but the repetition of the promises, sometimes with little relation to the context, given by God to the patriarch, seems to be a later addition to the stories.

Blessing is given in at least four different contexts in the patriarchal narratives : (i) strife with the local inhabitants, (ii) death of the father, (iii) marriage and (iv) departure on a journey.[43] Blessings given in the context of these circumstances, to enable the recipients to cope with these situations, are now joined together into a connected story so that blessings which were not originally associated with other events are now made to stand in connexion with each other.

(6) There is no special word for 'promise' in the Hebrew Bible.[44] It is given as the word or pledge of God. Blessings which were perhaps originally given in connexion with secular happenings and in cultic contexts are now connected with the word of God and are thereby turned into divine promises.

(7) The patriarchal story, beginning with Gen. 12, 1-3 with a five fold repetition of the root ברך , is already intimated in the blessing of Noah, where Shem, the ancestor of Abraham is blessed and given precedence over Canaan, who is cursed and reduced to a position of servitude (Gen. 9, 26).[45] There is no mention of promise here, but blessing is given in the name of Yahweh. In view of this, the promise of blessing given to Abraham in 12, 1-3 is but a reaffirmation of the blessing given to Shem his ancestor.[46] Thus the patriarchal narratives still reflect traces of an earlier stage when they were perhaps told as blessing stories.

The second stage in early Israelite religion begins when a third element enters into Canaan, namely, Yahwism,[47] which has characteristics similar to both the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers'[48] and the Canaanite El-religion which was bound to specific localities.[49] Yahwism belonged to the desert and was connected with deliverance and guidance, which were also the main features of the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers'. Yahwism was also localized on mount Sinai as the Canaanite

El-religion was localized at sanctuaries in Canaan. But, at the same time, Yahwism was different from the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' in that it was associated with commandments of Yahweh, which demanded obedient observance from his worshippers, whereas the 'gods of the fathers' did not demand any legal observances from their worshippers.[50] By contrast with Canaanite religion, Yahwism was not an agricultural religion, although it had a fixed sanctuary on mount Sinai. When the Yahweh worshippers entered into Canaan, their first reaction was that of a complete rejection of the Canaanite El-religion and also of the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers', which had by that time been totally absorbed into the Canaanite religion (cf. Jos. 24,15).[51]

The Elohist presupposes a connexion between the 'gods of the fathers' and Yahweh (Ex. 3, 6),[52] whereas the Priestly writing preserves a tradition according to which the El-deity had been connected with Yahweh (Ex. 6, 2f). The Elohist, in his concern for particularism in relation to Canaanite culture and religion,[53] omits the Canaanite stage altogether. But the Priestly writer, for whom the particularity of Israel in relation to Canaan was no longer a live issue, points to the fact that Canaanite El-religion did have its influence upon Yahwism. P is perhaps referring to the stage when all the traditions of the 'gods of the fathers' were completely absorbed into the Canaanite El-traditions and sanctuaries. The Yahwist, with his comprehensive outlook, sees the operation of one and the same god in the pre-Israelite nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers', in the Canaanite El-religion into which the former was incorporated, and in Sinai Yahwism.

It is interesting to note that the little creed (Deut. 26, 5ff.), which, according to von Rad, is the basis for the Hexateuchal salvation history of the Yahwist, does not mention the theme of 'Promise' at all.[54] The dangerous plight of the patriarch (ארמי אבד), the going down to

Egypt, the increase, the oppression, the cry of the oppressed people and the deliverance of Yahweh are stated merely as successive events with no reference to 'promise'. The Exodus is interpreted as the response of Yahweh to the cry of Israel in their affliction.[55] The two main themes mentioned in the creed - the increase of Israel in Egypt and the agricultural produce in Canaan are connected with the idea of blessing.[56] The cultic context within which the creed is placed points to its association with the idea of blessing and a belief in continued sustenance by the God of blessing. However, the word 'blessing' is not found in this passage either. The other themes, deliverance and guidance, represent the nomadic conception of God but they are subordinated to the crowning event, the receiving of the fruits of the land. The transition from the dangers connected with nomadic life to a settled, peaceful way of life is thankfully acknowledged. The whole accent is upon the joy connected with a settled way of life, in contrast to the hazards associated with a nomadic way of life. Thus the little creed has features which are similar to the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' and to Canaanite El-religion, but it does not contain any reference to the main themes of these religions, namely, 'Promise' and 'Blessing.'

Noth has pointed out that the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs' had already formed one of the five important themes of the twelve-tribe amphictyony centred in Shechem during the period of the Judges.[57] Noth designates the traditions connected with the amphictyony by the sign G (= Grundlage), and this formed the basis of J and E.[58] But, as has already been indicated above, it is difficult to conceive of such a highly developed theological scheme during the period of the Judges, when no creative literary or theological work is reported.[59] Thus it is possible to conjecture that Noth's Grundlage could perhaps point to a stage when the Yahwism of the twelve-tribe amphictyony had completely rejected

Canaanite religion and the religion of the 'gods of the fathers', which latter had already been completely absorbed into the former. Jos. 24 records how Josua summoned the people and exhorted them to leave the gods of the fathers and the gods of the land and to serve Yahweh alone (24, 15). The martial policy adopted towards the Canaanites is perhaps an expression of this exclusivism of Yahwism. Thus there was perhaps a total rejection of the religion and culture of the land of Canaan by amphictyonic Yahwism. Von Rad says that although the Yahwist was responsible for the incorporation of the theme of 'promise' into several places in the patriarchal narratives where it did not originally belong, the concept itself was not an innovation of the Yahwist, it was already there in the tradition received by him.[60] This is the tradition of the 'gods of the fathers', which is one of the three important elements of early Israelite religion. Amphictyonic religion has possibilities for developing towards a theology of promise and blessing, but it had as its main themes the people's cry for help in need and God's response to that cry, the divine commandment and their obedience to it. Jos. 24 tells us that all Israelites chose to serve Yahweh and to forsake the 'gods of the fathers' and the gods of the land, but the whole period of the Judges is a history of oscillation between Yahweh and the Canaanite deities. The people as a whole were for the Canaanization of the exclusive religion and of their desert way of life. Although the official Yahwism of the amphictyony refused any associations with the local Elim, the people were enthusiastic for it and carried on their worship at the local sanctuaries in their respective tribal areas. This again must be the result of the new needs connected with the settlement of the tribes in Canaan and related to their agricultural way of life in the arable land. Ahlström points out that even Gideon was at a Canaanite sanctuary when he received a vision from the angel of Yahweh.[61]

Moreover, with the completion of the Landnahme, the amphictyony did not have the same hold upon the different tribes, and as a result the old particularity of Yahwism began to loose its grip upon the people. The people entered more and more into Canaanite culture and participated in the local cults, equating them with Yahwism. But soon there was a strong reaction from the protagonists of the desert way of life and of the uncompromising particularity of Yahwism. These were conservatives who were shocked at the moral laxity and the magical cultic rites connected with the Canaanite cult centres. But popular opinion was favourable to Canaanite religion and to the Canaanite way of life, and they were eager to associate Yahwism with it. Ahlström says that such an association with local Canaanite religion was not regarded as apostasy.[62] The establishment of the monarchy in Israel is perhaps an indication of the success of the supporters of Canaanite religion and culture. The rejection of kingship by Gideon is an indication of the rejection of an attempt to associate with Canaanite culture, but it could not be put off for long, because very soon the people were demanding that Samuel should give them a king to rule over them like the other nations (I Sam. 8, 20). Two conflicting accounts are given about the appointment of a king in Israel. One account tells that Samuel tried to dissuade the people from establishing a monarchy in Israel (I Sam. 8, 1-18) as this would amount to a rejection of Yahweh (cf. 10, 18-19), whereas the second account reports that when the people asked for a king, Yahweh himself instructed Samuel to appoint a king in Israel (I Sam. 8, 19-22). Samuel represents the early prophetic groups and is associated with such groups of prophets in Naioth (I Sam. 19, 18-24), prophets who were in close association with the Nazirites and who stood for a return to nomadic culture and religion.[63] These ideas were later continued amongst the Rechabites in the time of Jeremiah (Jer. 35). These groups were opposed to everything that

belonged to Canaan. But popular opinion was enthusiastic for Canaanite culture and religion. Noth says that this hesitation about establishing a monarchy in Israel arose precisely because the king was associated with cult-ritual functions and was considered to be a divine person, an idea altogether incompatible with Yahwism.[64] To begin with, Saul was acceptable to supporters of exclusive Yahwism, and Saul is described as a prophet, indeed as an extreme type of exstatic prophet who joined the bands of prophets who were opposed to any association with local religion and culture.[65] But Samuel opposed Saul when the latter began to assume the role of a Canaanite king, since this was looked upon as apostasy, and Samuel worked for Saul's downfall by secretly anointing David as king (I Sam. 16, 1-13).

David's military successes made this problem of Canaanite influence much more acute. David's vast empire brought within its fold many non-Israelitic groups who brought with them Canaanite culture, religious ideas and practices, and there arose a tension between exclusive Yahwism and the popular enthusiasm for Canaanization. David recognised this tension and attempted to solve it by giving equal support to both these elements in his empire. He appointed court prophets, who stood for exclusive Yahwism,[66] and thus won the support of this group. He also supported the popular desire to include within Yahwism the good features of Canaanite religion and culture by turning the Jebusite El-Elyon sanctuary of Jerusalem into Yahweh's sanctuary. This he did by bringing the Ark to his capital Jerusalem (II Sam. 6)[67]. It was perhaps during this period that the Yahwist set himself, through his writing, to bring about a synthesis between these two opposing elements. In both of these he recognised limitations and saw them as complementing rather than opposing each other. Thus he begins the history of his people with a promise and a blessing, representing both the nomadic and the

sedentary cultures, and formulates a theology which includes both guidance and creative blessing for Israel and for mankind as a whole. He brings together the traditions of all the ethnic groups represented in the Davidic kingdom and reorientates the original blessing-traditions in terms of promise and fulfilment, thus bringing both of these under the idea of divine command, which is the main feature of Yahwism.[68] The salvation history begins with a command followed by promise and blessing and thereby includes all the three important elements of the roots from which the religion of Israel has emerged and developed.[69] The Yahwist saw the relations between Israel and the people of the land, among whom were also earlier immigrants, as one of mutual tolerance and co-existence under Yahweh and not that of subordination of one to the other. Thus the Yahwist works out a synthesis which would help to form a common rallying point for the different peoples in the Davidic empire. In doing this the Yahwist does not lose his faith in Yahweh but asserts that it is Yahweh who was at work amongst all these peoples and equates Yahweh both with the 'gods of the fathers' and with the Canaanite deity El.

The prefacing of the patriarchal history with the primeval history by the Yahwist is perhaps inspired by Canaanite creation theology.[70] The alternation between blessing and curse, well-being and disaster in the primeval history gives an impression of a cyclic view of history. It is similar to the cyclic creation-destruction themes celebrated in the Canaanite New Year festival. There is no death and resurrection of the deity in the primeval history, but perhaps the change of the name of God in each epoch in P still preserves this Canaanite trace. P calls God 'Elohim' in the primeval history, 'El Shaddai' in the patriarchal period and 'Yahweh' in the Mosaic period. The Yahwist has one and the same divine name 'Yahweh' for all of these periods because he aimed at

creating in his theology a unifying force which would produce harmony amongst the peoples of the Davidic kingdom who were divided in terms of culture and religion.

The Elohist has a negative attitude towards Canaan. He refers to Canaan in an indifferent manner in the Sinai pericope, where he reports Yahweh's words about Canaan, 'the place[71] of which I have spoken to you' (Ex. 32, 34), an expression which is in contrast to the Yahwist's reference to Canaan as a 'land flowing with milk and honey' (Ex. 33, 3). The Elohist views Canaan as a place of test and punishment for Israel (Ex. 32, 34 'In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them').[72] In reference to the initial call of Abraham, E reports the words of Abraham to Abimelech, 'When God set me to wander from my father's house .....', and there is no mention there of Canaan as the place to which God had led him (Gen. 20, 13). E also avoids the theme of 'blessing' altogether except in places where it is a necessary part of the tradition (Gen. 27; Num. 23).[73] This avoidance of the theme of 'blessing' is in keeping with his negative attitude towards Canaan, its culture and its religion. E's prophetic view is in agreement with his particularistic attitude, an attitude which was very strong amongst conservative groups in Israel. This negative attitude of E towards Canaan was perhaps influenced by the establishment of Canaanite bull-worship by Jeroboam I in Bethel and the consequent Canaanite influence in the Northern Kingdom.[74] Thus the Elohist incorporates his materials from the early traditions and emphasizes his special point of view that Israel is a people of God with no relation to other peoples (Num. 23, 9). Wolff considers that the whole of the E source emphasizes the fear of Yahweh and considers the period in which the Elohist wrote it as a time of testing for Israel with respect to the exclusive worship of Yahweh.[75] Canaanite culture and religion,

according to E, do not have any positive significance for Israel, they only form the sphere in which the obedience of Israel is tested. As a result the land-promise is not at all prominent in the E source.[76]

The Priestly writer preserves both the nomadic and the Kulturland features of the early religion of the pre-Israelite tribes. He gives a special name to the god of the patriarchs, אל שדי , a name similar to the names of the Canaanite El-deities, having, at the same time, features of a nomadic 'god of the fathers' in that the deity is not connected to a place. There have been attempts by some scholars to localize this god in Hebron,[77] but this is precisely what P is trying to avoid, in that he wants to show that the early Israelite idea of God developed through a combination of both the nomadic and the Canaanite ideas of God. P employs the theme of 'blessing' in the primeval history and in the patriarchal history.[78] To the patriarchal promise-blessing context P adds a third element in addition to the usual promise of land and posterity, namely that of worship (17, 7). God promises to be the God of Abraham and his descendants. In 28, 2-4 the blessing given to Jacob is called 'the blessing of Abraham', and this points to the promise of God to Abraham in Gen. 12, 1-3, because P does not mention any blessing given to Abraham in Gen. 17. Although P's special interest is in the worship of Yahweh, he still uses Canaanite elements to enrich the Israelite concept of God and makes use of 'blessing' in his account of the promise made by God to the patriarchs. At the same time P also maintains the importance of the nomadic culture by referring to Canaan as ארץ מגוריהם , a land in which the patriarchs had wandered about as strangers and received only a foretaste of the future possession of the land through acquiring a place of burial in Canaan (Gen. 23).

Thus the three sources of the Pentateuch give the impression of the meeting of the nomadic and sedentary cultures during the patriarchal period. The authors of these sources reinterpret this period in terms of the problems which they had to face, because they looked upon this period as one in which their God had led their nation to a fruitful outcome in such an encounter with other peoples, their cultures and their religions. The Yahwist was faced with the surge of a native heterogenous population into the Davidic empire, the Elohist with the Canaanite Baal cults claiming equality with the Yahwistic faith, and P with the Exilic community in their encounter with Babylonian culture and religion. For all three, the patriarchal period was the first example of such an encounter between different cultures. Although the solutions they have proposed are different, they all recognize the fact that there was a religious and cultural confrontation of different peoples during the pre-Israelite period. The Priestly account is based on J and E, and of the two earlier sources the Yahwist's account gives a more progressive direction, in that it breaks through the narrow particularism to a wider universalism extending the promise of blessing beyond the limits of Israel to all peoples. The 'Jehovist' recognizes this by giving predominance to the Yahwistic scheme of the patriarchal narratives, subordinating the Elohist's account to that of the former,[79] so that the Elohistic account is preserved only in a fragmentary manner, although it, too, originally included a complete account of the patriarchal traditions parallel to that of the Yahwistic account.[80]

2. The Theology of Promise

The theology of promise in the patriarchal narratives is developed within the context of cultural tensions. The concept of promise, originally connected with nomadic culture and religion, became associated with the idea of blessing, the main feature of Canaanite religion, when the pre-Israelite tribes entered into Canaan. These were later associated with the idea of divine command, the chief characteristic of Yahwism.[81] This development is to be understood not as an evolutionary process from a lower form to a higher form of religion, but as a syncretistic process.[82] Syncretism expresses the process of struggle between two incompatible forms of faith. It involves holding on to one's own faith and yet appreciating the contrary religious point of view in the other religion, to such an extent that there results a transformation of one's understanding and expression of one's own particular faith.[83] Nomadic religion emphasized the coming God of promise, Canaanite religion the present God of blessing, and Yahwism the command of God and the obedience of his worshippers. These three concepts were essential parts of the different cultural contexts to which these religions had originally belonged. The joining together of different traditions connected with these cultures and religions had led to an association of their particular theological concepts. This connecting together of the different traditions is expressed by the Yahwist through his promise pattern 'Command - Promise - Blessing'. The Elohist, while presenting a similar pattern, transforms the blessing-concept in it, because it was not in agreement with his particular point of view. The Priestly writer employs this promise pattern of the Yahwist in his own version of the patriarchal narratives. Thus, the theme of promise in the patriarchal narratives emerges as a comprehensive idea which takes into account these three important elements which constitute the

basis of the religion of Israel.

Promises are given through divine revelations. The revelation narratives connected with different patriarchs and different contexts may be divided into at least four different groups with regard to the manner of the divine manifestations :

(i) Direct revelation through the word of God, with no description of the actual manner of revelation. These revelations generally being with ויאמר יהוה or אמר יהוה (12,1; 13,14; 22,1; 31,3. 11; 35,1). This form of revelation may be understood as an inner inspiration by which the devotee becomes aware of God's presence and God's word. The expression היה דבר יהוה , which recalls prophetic revelation, also belongs to this section.

(ii) Revelation through a visual manifestation of the deity. The expression ויראה (the Niph'al of ראה) is employed in such revelations (12,7; 17,1; 18,1; 26,2. 24; 35,1). It literally means that 'God showed himself to so and so'. Lindblom believes that the narrator thought of this experience as a vision of God.[84]

(iii) Revelation through a dream or vision (מחזה 15,1). The word חלום is employed in such narratives to indicate that it is a dream experience. This form is usually interpreted as an 'incubation-dream'; in other words, revelation is experienced in a dream state while the recipient is staying at a sanctuary (28, 10-15).

(iv) Revelation is also given through the mediation of מלאך אלהים or מלאך יהוה (22, 11.15).

In all of these revelations the nature of the revelation is not clearly described and the revelation itself is given in the form of a brief notice. On the other hand, there is a marked emphasis on the details of promise and blessing. Moltmann points out that Israel was interested in revelation not for its own sake, but as a medium of the divine promises.

As a result, not much detail is given about the nature of the divine revelation. He says that promise points away from the revelation to the yet unrealized future about which it speaks.[85] Similarly, Zimmerli, too, observes that in the revelation accounts the importance is shifted from the sensually perceptible appearance of Yahweh to the announcement of his action.[86] The revelation accounts connected with the different patriarchs emphasizes the divine promises. In Gen. 18, the appearance of God is described in anthropomorphic terms, but even there the appearance of the actual deity is obscured in the narrative, which speaks of three men amongst whom Yahweh is only vaguely identified. The revelation is in the form of a dialogue and not in the form of a visual description of the deity. The whole narrative is connected more with the revelation of the divine purpose for Abraham and his posterity than with the description of the divine appearance. Revelation of promise and the divine plan for Israel and for the whole of mankind are the main contents of the theophanies in the patriarchal narratives. Moltmann draws a distinction between the religion of Israel and the religions of her neighbours on the basis of promise, and he identifies the former as a promise religion and the latter as epiphany religions. Promise religion is future-orientated and has a historical perspective, in contrast to the epiphany religions which have no historical perspective and are only concerned with the present. The deity in a promise-religion is connected with people, whereas in an epiphany religion he is bound to a particular place. Thus, according to Moltmann, the Israelite God 'Yahweh' is not an 'apparitional God', because his appearance is not an end in itself but is the means of declaring promises and the future well-being of the people of God.[87] But it is impossible to maintain this distinction, because the revelation of Yahweh is also concerned with the present and with events which are not strictly historical.[88] Moltmann's conclusion may perhaps point to the fact that

these two ideas originally belong to the religions of the nomadic and sedentary peoples respectively. Nomadic religion is connected with blessing and present sustenance, with growth and development. But both of these ideas are closely connected with each other in the promise passages. The future orientation of promise is related to the present through the idea of blessing, and the unhistorical blessing concept is historicized through its connexion with the idea of promise. Moreover, 'promise' historicizes the idea of blessing and gives to its cyclic view of history a progressive idea of leading to a future fulfilment. The present is seen not as a repetition of the past but as the basis for a glorious future in fulfilment of divine promises. 'Blessing' lacks a historical perspective in that it does not look to a future fulfilment but becomes effective in unfolding its power in normal happenings from the moment of its utterance. Blessing is given as promise in the patriarchal narratives and thereby acquires a historical orientation which it originally did not possess.

The idea of promise itself is refined through its association with 'blessing'. Promise calls for obedience and expectant waiting for the acts of the coming God, whereas 'blessing' calls for active co-operation with God in his acts of creation. This is especially prominent in the fertility cults of Canaanite religion. Man is thought of as sharing in the divine activity of creation through taking part in the cultic fertility rites which ensure the divine creative power in nature. This idea turns the concept of promise into one of active co-operation between man and God. Abraham is called to co-operate with God in his promised salvation for Israel and for all the nations of the earth (והיה ברכה Gen. 12, 2). This is the real purpose of the divine revelation and announcement of promise, rather than merely stating his future plans and prospects. The concept of blessing emphasizes the active participation of the

recipient of promise in the promised salvation and not mere passive reception of divine salvation. The Yahwist extends his participation to the peoples as well through employing the Niph'al of ברך.[89] Thus, promise is not mere announcement but a call to co-operation with God in actualizing the divine purpose.[90]

The God of promise connected with nomadic religion is believed to lead and guide his people from one place to another in search of means of livelihood. This deity is not associated with the idea of creation. He is not credited with powers to change the surroundings of his people through his creative powers. The God of blessing belonging to Canaan, on the other hand, is associated with creative powers by which he renews nature and, through the change of seasons, provides means of sustenance for his worshippers in one place. He is not obliged to lead his people from one place to another as the nomadic God does. Through the association of blessing with promise, creative powers are attributed to Yahweh, and Yahweh is regarded as the creator of the whole world,[91] The idea of guidance is also transformed, through its association with the Canaanite religion of blessing. Guidance, hitherto interpreted in terms of space, is now interpreted as guidance in the one place where the deity is supposed to dwell. The spatial term is now interpreted in a temporal sense as guidance through generations.[92] The creative activity of God also makes it possible to interpret guidance in every generation of the descendants of the patriarchs.

In view of the creative powers of God, promise itself is never limited to one generation. As God renews the seasons and replenishes the earth, so does he renew his promises for each generation. God gives the promise to each generation of the patriarchs and blesses them all. The fulfilment of promise does not exhaust it but points to a more glorious fulfilment in the future. Von Rad expresses this aspect of promise

by observing that the presentation of the fulfilment of a promise very often contains something that transcends what actually happened.

> 'All is in motion. Things are never used up, but their very fulfilment gives rise, all unexpected, to the promise of yet greater things ..... Here nothing carries its ultimate meaning in itself, but is ever earnest of yet greater wonders.'[93]

This is related to the unending creative activity of God. Moltmann points out that in view of this ever widening horizon or promise, there is no 'melancholy of fulfilment' in the Old Testament.[94] This is the result of the reinterpretation of promise in relation to the idea of blessing. For example, the promise of land to the patriarchs is enlarged to include the promise of land to Israel as a nation. The settlement of Israel in Canaan did not exhaust the promise of land but pointed to a future rest which Yahweh would create for his people. Similarly, the promise of a son is enlarged to include the promise of increased descendants, and this is further enlarged to include the religious community of the people, that El Shaddai would be the God of Abraham and his descendants. Promise is not exhausted through fulfilment, fulfilment only points to a much wider and more glorious fulfilment for the people of God. Moltmann calls this an 'overspill' of promise which points to further fulfilment in the future in spite of its present partial fulfilment.[95]

Covenant, which is connected with the confirmation of the divine promises (Gen. 15), is also interpreted in terms of the creative act of God. Covenant, originally a concluding act connected with promise, is interpreted as a renewal of the recipient of promise. This is especially emphasized by P during whose time the idea of the renewal of

man was a leading religious concept in Israel.[96]

The idea of blessing breaks down the narrow particularism of the ideas of promise and election. The idea of creation connected with blessing makes all men equal in the sight of God. Altmann points out that in both J and L, Israel's election is drawn against the background of the primeval history. The idea of Yahweh as the creator and judge of peoples precedes the election if Israel. The election of Israel is not described as an original part of the plan of God at the time of creation; it was only a later arrangement in view of the disobedience of man. Furthermore, the election of Israel includes blessing for all peoples. Altmann calls this 'charitable universalism (karitativen Universalismus)'. The Elohist has a particularistic interpretation. The Priestly writer spiritualizes the election concept in terms of religious universalism and cult.[97] This universalistic interpretation of promise is connected with mission, which calls for responsible action on the part of the recipient of promise. But the recipient of promise is free to accept, to reject or even to misinterpret the divine promise and to act according to his own personal decision. This is especially prominent in the story of Hagar (Gen. 16), where Abraham and Sarah attempt to make sure of the heir of promise.[98]

The ideas of divine command and of demand for obedience, connected with Yahwism, are refined through their association with promise and blessing. Between the command and the obedient response of the patriarch, the promise-blessing theme is introduced, and this turns the apparently arbitrary command and demand for obedience into the gracious work of God for the salvation of man. It is because God has a glorious plan for Israel and for the whole world that he commands them. The command itself becomes the revelation of the divine purpose of salvation. Abraham is

commanded to go from his home and from his people because God has a purpose of salvation for him. This gives a positive appreciation of the divine command, an appreciation which continues to be emphasized throughout the Old Testament. This is perhaps the reason why there are no specific obligations laid upon the patriarchs in relation to covenant. Moreover, the connexion of promise-blessing with the idea of the transformation of man makes the stipulation of obligations unnecessary. The command is now interpreted as the call of God to the patriarch to co-operate with him in his plan to create salvation for all men.

The recipient of promise is depicted as a man of humility. Abraham gives preference to Lot in the division of the land. Jacob submits to Esau, in spite of the fact that Jacob is promised that he would be victorious over gods and men. The idea of triumph through submission is connected with promise in the patriarchal narratives. The recipient of promise is given the grace to submit and to settle differences in a peaceful manner.

Promise is given as a command of God in P (35,11). The word of God is understood as a creative word bringing about salvation and well-being for man. Command, promise and blessing are seen to be influencing each other and thus developing a theology of promise which is unique in the history of religion. This has been the result of cultural confrontation between early Israel on the one hand and the nomadic and Canaanite cultures on the other. One is entitled to ask at this point how this could be interpreted as divine revelation, if it is only the result of the meeting of different religions and different cultures. If all of these ideas were connected with different cultures and religions, none of them would be able to claim a complete revelation of God, and Israel's religion would be the result only of syncretism and not of a direct revelation of God. But it may be argued, on the other hand, that this only proves that God

was at work in different cultures and religions. The revelation and guidance of God to Israel may be seen in the fact that they were given the insight to formulate their theology in relation to the environment into which they had come to live, while at the same time holding on to their own God 'Yahweh'. This feature contributed to the final triumph of Yahwism over the other religions in Canaan. Israel's confrontation with other religions led them to a better understanding of their own faith and to a more positive appreciation of the depth of the divine mystery.

The promise pattern 'command - promise - blessing' makes it possible for the Yahwist to identify the three deities connected with these special doctrines as one and the same God. Thus, the name Yahweh is used in connexion with all the different traditions and the names 'El' and the 'gods of the fathers' are used as equivalent to Yahweh. On the other hand, theElohist with his aversion to Canaan and its religion, avoids the name 'El' altogether in his account and in its place employs the term אלהים unknown in Canaan,[99] and omits or changes the concept of blessing. P formulates a new name, אל שדי , to try to bring out the difference between these religions and to underline their special characteristics. However, all the three sources reflect the one fact, that Yahweh is the God of Israel and that certain features from the pre-Israelite religions have been incorporated into Yahwism.

The concept of promise, developed in relation to the ideas of blessing and divine command, has its bearing upon the idea of God in the patriarchal narratives.

1. The God of promise in the patriarchal narratives is not a narrow, partial deity but the creator of heaven and earth who is equally concerned with the salvation of all men. This feature is emphasized by prefacing the election story with the story of creation. God has chosen Israel

to be co-workers with him in this plan of salvation. The other peoples also have an active role to play in obtaining salvation for themselves.

2. God is a God of promise and blessing. He acts both in historical events and in normal day-to-day happenings. In the patriarchal narratives there are no historical events recorded, but the promise passage in 15, 13-16 perhaps points to the Exodus and the Settlement as historical events. By the association of the Exodus and Settlement traditions with the patriarchal narratives, the simple family stories connected with blessing are made to look forward to a future fulfilment in Israel's historical events. In this way the concept of blessing is turned into promise, anticipating a future fulfilment.

3. God is depicted as the master planner. He directs international, historical events and the lives of individual men in accordance with his plan of salvation. He also sustains his creation through his creative powers in preserving and sustaining and in effecting growth and development. He discloses his plans to his chosen ones in order that they may intelligently co-operate with him. The revelation of his plan is with a view to inviting man to share with him in the actualizing of his plan.

4. God's command is with a view to man's salvation. It is not the despotic whim of an arbitrary ruler but the gracious concern of the benevolent creator. The summons to the patriarchs is connected with this gracious purpose of salvation for all men. God's call to the patriarchs should be interpreted in relation to these wider perspectives of promise.[100]

5. God is a God of renewal. He not only renews seasons and nature but also man. He renews the recipients of promise through the change of their names, and this represents a change in their character and destiny.[101] God also renews promises to each generation, blesses them and summons them to co-operate with him in his plan of salvation. This renewal takes away the tensions involved in relation to command and the demand for obedience. The patriarchs spontaneously obey the divine summons and 'obedience' is the main theme of the Elohistic source.[102] This aspect of summons and obedience is also found in the promise passages in the Yahwist and in the Priestly writer.

6. Promise, as the word of God, not only announces future salvation but also creates salvation for man. Promise is given as the creative command of God (Gen. 35, 11 P). The creative powers connected with the word of blessing are transferred to God's creative word of promise-blessing. The creative word of blessing is introduced in the imperative form both in the primeval history (Gen. 1, 28; 9, 7) and in the patriarchal narratives (35, 11).

7. The promise pattern 'command - promise - blessing', is set at the beginning of the patriarchal story, and the subsequent narratives describe the patriarchs' obedient response to and co-operation in the divine plan of salvation, fulfilment of the divine promise <u>in nuce</u> and the unfolding of the divine blessings. There is repetition of terms in the call and promise narratives of each patriarch as well as repetition of events in the lives of each of them. This repetition of terms and events arises out of a repetition of the basic 'command - promise - Blessing' pattern, for the patriarchal narratives, seen as a whole, are constructed on the basis of this pattern.

A P P E N D I X

Tables showing the connexion of Command - Promise - Blessing

in the patriarchal narratives

Passage	Command (Imperative)	Promise (Imperfect)	Blessing or Heilsschilderung (Imperfect)
12,1-3	לך-לך מארצך	ואעשך לגוי גדול	ואברכך
		ואגדלה שמך	ואברכה
		ואתן את-הארץ הזאת	
13,14-17	שא נא עיניך	כי את-כל-הארץ	Heilsschilderung
		לך אתננה	
15,1-5	אל-תירא	יצא ממעיך הוא יירשך	Heilsschilderung
15,9.18-19	קחה לך עגלה[1]	לזרעך נתתי	Heilsschilderung
17,1.6.16	התהלך לפני והיה תמים	והפרתי אתך	וברכתיה
		ונתתיך לגוים	
18,10	No command	שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה	No blessing
		והנה-בן לשרה	

ברך אברכך	כי־ברך אברכך והרבה ארבה	קחה־נא את־בנך" ולך־לך	22,1.16-17
אברכך	אתן את־כל־הארצות"	אל־תרד מצרימה" גור בארץ	26,2-3
וברכתיך	והרביתי את־זרעך	אל־תירא	26,24
	הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך	LXX μη φοβου[2]	28.13-14
	אהיה עמך	שוב אל־ארץ אבותיך	31,3;32,10.12
	לך אתננה את הארץ אתן	פרה ורבה	35,10-11

Heilsschilderung

32,10 אשיבה עמך

32,12

Heilsschilderung

Blessing reported in verse 10.

וברך אתו

Command itself is given as a blessing.

Promise is connected with 'Command' and 'Blessing' in the patriarchal narratives. H-P. Müller observes that Imperative and Promise are connected in Gen. 12, 1-3; Hos. 14, 2-9 and Is. 7, 4-9,[3] but this characteristic can also be seen in other promise passages in the patriarchal narratives. Command is given both in the Imperative and as a prohibition

אל-תירא is connected with the Holy War as an oracle of assurance,[4] and is thus associated with Yahweh. In this way both command and prohibition make their appearance prior to 'promise' and are both connected with Yahwism. Zimmerli and Westermann point out the close connection between 'Promise' and 'Blessing' in the patriarchal narratives. It was the Yahwist who was responsible for associating 'blessing' with 'promise', thereby turning an unhistorical magical concept into a historical concept.[5] Both 'promise' and 'blessing' are given in the imperfect, pointing to a future fulfilment. In passages where the root ברך is absent (2.3.4.10.11) 'blessing' is still implied in the Heilsschilderung (portrayal of salvation) which, according to Westermann, has its roots in 'blessing' (or, more precisely, in the oracles that expand blessing) and derives from the pre-Israelite period.[6]

The promise of the son in 18,10 is neither preceded by a promise nor followed by a blessing. Westermann says that this is an original promise from which all the other promises later derived, the promise of increase and of land.[7] The fact that it stands alone probably confirms this observation of Westermann.

The complex 'command - promise - blessing' is most frequent in the Yahwistic source. The Priestly writing also has these elements, but the connection is not as close as in J. It is interesting to note that none of these passages are from the Elohist, who disregards completely the idea of 'blessing' because of its close association with Canaanite religion.[8]

N O T E S - A P P E N D I X

1. MT לו , reading לי with S.

2. See above p. 195.

3. H-P. Müller, 'Imperativ und Verheissung', Ev.Th, xxviii (1968) pp. 557-571.

4. See above pp. 127-128.

5. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 92; C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, pp. 25f.; 'Verheissung an Israel', EKL iii, col. 1646; 'The Way of Promise through the Old Testament', The Old Testament and Christian Faith, pp. 210-211.

6. C. Westermann, Ibid, p. 209.

7. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, p. 19.

8. See above p. 235. Although the story in chapter 22 is attributed to E the promise passage vv. 15-18 is generally considered to be a later addition (See above pp. 165ff) and as such does not belong to the Elohist.

NOTES

Section - I

1. O. Eissfeldt, 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule', RGG^{2}, iv, cols. 1898-1905; G.W. Ittel, 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule', EKL, iii, cols. 587-588; H.F. Hahn, Old Testament in Modern Research, pp. 83-96.

2. H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit, p. 157f.

3. H. Gunkel, Genesis^{I}, HKAT, 1901.

4. J. Wellhausen, Reste arabischen Heidentums, Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, iii, p. 5 cf. O. Eissfeldt, 'Julius Wellhausen', KS i, p. 70.

5. Indeed Wellhausen had attributed the mythological ideas to Babylonian influence during the Exilic period, but Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos, pp. 35-55, has pointed out that the creation myths were already known to the Canaanites in the Amarna age, and that Israel had taken them over from Canaanite culture.

6. W. Klatt, Hermann Hunkel, p. 76.

7. Ibid, pp. 73f., Klatt refers to the correspondence between Gressmann and Gunkel, in which it is stated that both are dubbed 'impressionists and aesthetes' by Wellhausen, for emphasizing the literary and aesthetic characteristics of the sagas.

8. H. Gunkel, Genesis^{3}, HKAT, 1917.

9. H. Gunkel, Genesis^{1}, p. lviii; Genesis^{3}, p. lxxxv; W. Klatt, op.cit., p. 153.

10. H. Gressmann, 'Sage und Geschichte in den Patriarchenerzählungen', ZAW xxx (1910) pp. 28ff.

11. H. Gunkel, Genesis[3], p. lx. But W.H.G. Baudissin, Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte, vol. iii, pp. 137ff., has shown that El worship belongs to the cultural context of Canaan and that this representation of the patriarchal religion as El religion presupposes Canaanization of the patriarchal sagas.

12. C. Westermann, Forschung, p. 39, n. 23, on the other hand, is not happy with Gunkel's designation of the patriarchal narratives as 'Sagen', because the term 'Saga' is mainly associated with the 'Hero-saga' of the Icelandic and Germanic sagas, a Gattung which is entirely absent in the patriarchal narratives. Westermann prefers to call them 'Erzählungen' (narratives), as they are family stories and not hero-sagas.

13. H. Gunkel, Genesis[1], pp. i-v; The Legends of Genesis, pp. 3-12; A summary of the points in W. Klatt, op. cit., pp. 126-128.

14. H. Gunkel, Genesis[3], p. xxxii; cf. H.F. Hahn, The Old Testament in Modern Research, p. 126.

15. H. Gunkel, Genesis[1], p. xviii.

16. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, p. 12, observes that Gunkel stressed the importance of the individual narrative, the smallest unit in the tradition and thus did not deal with the thematic significance of the patriarchal narratives and as such about the theme 'Promise to the patriarchs.'

17. H. Gunkel, The Legends of Genesis, pp. 107-109.

18. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, pp. 1-77.

19. E. Elliger, 'Zur Frage nach dem Alter des Jahweglaubens bei den Israeliten. Ein Beitrag zur neuesten Erörterung des Problems der ältesten Religion Israels durch Albrecht Alt, "Der Gott der Väter",' ThBl ix (1930) cols. 100f., argues that there is no indication in this passage that the name Yahweh was not known before the revelation to Moses. He points out that לעולם (v. 15) does not mean 'from now onwards' but means 'for all time', which includes the past, present and the future.

20. A. Alt, op cit., pp. 15-17.

21. The only two names that might be considered as having the theophoric element in the pre-Mosaic period are perhaps 'Judah' יהודה the name of one of the sons of Jacob and 'Jochebed' יוכבד , the mother of Moses (Ex.6,20P). A. Alt, op cit., p. 6, n. 6 discounts the name Judah as having any relation to the name יהוה . M. Noth, Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung, p. 111, considers the connection of 'Yahweh' with 'Jochebed' to be very uncertain. K. Elliger, op cit., Cols. 99f., on the other hand, points out that the name of the mother of Moses יוכבד does have a theophoric element 'Yahweh' and so also 'Judah'. But he says that the change of name in Ex. 3 does not have much significance for the Elohist as he still continues to use the name אלהים after Ex. 3. Further, Elliger observes that the names with the 'Yahweh' component are not very frequent even after the revelation of this special name to Moses and that they also do not appear amongst the Kenites and the Midianites with whom Yahwism was originally connected. Therefore Elliger rejects as invalid, Alt's argument from silence.

22. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen an die drei Erzväter, p. 96, on the other hand, points out that the name אבי יעקב does not occur in the course of the patriarchal narratives. It appears only in the poem of the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49, 24) and that פחד יצחק in the Elohist is almost equivalent to יהוה . Alt op cit., pp. 25-29,

does consider these in his discussion but says that these have been glossed over by the special Israelite word for God, אלהים .

23. A. Alt, op cit., p. 66, n. 199. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., p. 95 says that מגן אברהם is attested nowhere and that it is an arbitrary creation of Alt. It may however be pointed out that Alt is cautious and is aware of such an objection and therefore suggests it only in a footnote and not in the body of his essay.

24. M. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 126, points out that traditions of the patriarchs may have been lost in the course of the development of the Israelite traditions. H. Seebass, Der Erzväter Israel und die einführung der Jahwehverehrung in Kanaan, pp. 11-34 argues for the existence of a cult of the 'god of Israel' in Shechem connected with a separate patriarch 'Israel', who was later identified with Jacob. Cf. also V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels' Sch. Th.U xxviii (1958) pp. 8f., who proposes the existence of a separate 'god of the fathers' with a special name רעה ישראל and a fourth father ישראל .

25. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 28.

26. J. Hempel, Review article on Alt's 'Der Gott der Väter' ThLZ lv (1930) col. 268, thinks that the concept 'the God of Abraham' was a creation of the Yahwist after the pattern of the 'God of Isaac' and the 'God of Jacob'. For Hempel, Abraham is the Habiru man of Gen. 14,13, who has been secondarily connected with the special cult of the 'God of Abraham'.

27. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., pp. 91ff., objects to this comparison on the grounds that the inscriptions, especially that of the 'god of Arkesilaos', belongs to the Greek period and that the gods mentioned in them are not the desert nomadic deities but gods of the settled lands.

28. A. Alt, op. cit., pp. 49-51.

29. Ibid, p.57. There seems to be an apparent inconsistency here in Alt, when he says that Yahwism was not connected to a place, because earlier in his essay (p. 7) Alt has pointed out that Yahwism was 'located at a mountain sanctuary in the desert', i.e., at Sinai where the Israelite tribes worshipped Yahweh along with other tribes of the desert. See below n. 116.

30. A. Alt, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

31. K. Galling, Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels, BZAW xlviii (1928) pp. 63ff.; A. Alt, op. cit., pp. 62f.

32. Ibid, p. 63.

33. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 64 does not proceed to indicate how this was made possible, but it is perhaps on account of their being connected to a particular locality.

34. It is interesting to note that Alt (op. cit., p. 64 n. 173) uses the term 'blessing' as equivalent to 'Promise', and even attributes it to the 'gods of the fathers'. As will be shown below (pp. 222f), 'blessing' belongs to the Canaanite Elim religion in distinction to 'Promise' which belongs to the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers'.

35. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 22,

36. Th.C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel, pp. 292-293, n. 12.

37. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 27. See below p. 60.

38. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Erzvätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitz-Verheissungen' WZ Halle xvii (1968) 45-53; cf. also 'El and Yahweh' JSS i (1956) p. 36.

39. B. Gemser, 'Questions concerning the religion of the patriarchs', Adhuc Loquitur, p. 59 puts his view in the form of a rhetorical question but does not discuss it in detail.

40. K.T. Andersen, 'Der Gott meines Vaters', St. Th xvi (1962) pp. 170-171 M. Buber, The prophetic faith, p. 42; I. Blythin, 'The patriarchs and the promise' SJT xxi (1968) pp. 59-60; F.M. Cross, 'Yahweh and the God of the fathers', HThR lv (1962) 225-259; R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 24; ' אבהים ' ThWAT i/Lieferung i (1970) col. 56; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. i, p. 180; K. Elliger, 'Zur Frage nach dem Alter des Yahweglaubens bei den Israeliten. Ein Beitrag zur neuesten Erörterung des Problems der ältesten Religion Israels durch Albrecht Alt, "Der Gott der Väter",' ThBl v (1930) cols. 97-103; B. Gemser, 'God in Genesis', OTS xii (1958) pp. 20-21; J.M. Holt, Patriarchs of Israel, p. 129; J.P. Hyatt, 'Yahweh as the God of my father', VT v (1955) pp. 130-136; B. Gemser, 'Questions concerning the religion of the fathers' Ahuc Loquitur, p. 55; A. Jepsen, 'Zur Uberlieferungsgeschichte der Vatergestalten', WZ Leipzig iii (1953/54) p. 270; A. Lods, 'Origins', Record and Revelation, p. 201; N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 90, n.6. pp. 116-118; V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels', SchThU xxviii (1958) p. 3; H.G. May, The patriarchal idea of God', JBL lx (1941) pp. 113-128; M. Noth, A History of Israel, p. 121; Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch, p. 58; E. Nielsen, Shechem, p. 308; L. Rost, 'Die Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen, p. 353; H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion,

pp. 20-21; W.H. Schmidt, Alttestamentlicher Glaube und seine Umwelt, p. 21; J. Scharbert, Solidarität in Segen und Fluch im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt, p. 170, n. 192 and p. 171, n. 198. H. Seebass, Der Erzvater Israel, p. 52; R.J. Thompson, Patience and Sacrifice in early Israel outside Levitical Law, p. 34; G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. i, p. 7; Genesis, p. 184; Th.C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel, p. 107; H. Weidmann, Die Patriarchen und ihre Religion, pp. 126-173 has a detailed section on Alt's 'God of the fathers' and subsequent discussion on it; C. Westermann, Forschung, p. 15, n. 6; W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 90.

41. Cf. H. Weidmann, op. cit., p. 159.

42. A. Jepsen, op. cit., p. 274.

43. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 66.

44. K. Galling, Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels, BZAW xlviii (1928). pp. 37-67.

45. Cf. H. Weidmann, op cit., p. 134 who has a similar division.

46. M. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch, p. 3.

47. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 65 attributes posterity to the pre-Canaanite stage and the land-promise to the Canaanite stage of the tradition, but Noth puts both of these into the pre-Canaanite period.

48. M. Noth, History, pp. 123f., In view of this, the implication of Gemser, op. cit., p. 59, that Noth concedes that the patriarchs were historical figures, cannot be maintained. Noth is definite that there is no historical

information available about the patriarchs when he says : 'We have no evidence for making any definite historical assertions about the time, place, presuppositions and circumstances of the lives of the patriarchs as human beings'. What Noth traces is the tradition-history of the patriarchs and not history as such.

49. M. Noth, History, p. 125; cf. A. Alt, op. cit., p. 56.

50. For amphictyony cf. M. Noth, History, pp. 85-97, and also Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 58-61.

51. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 48-49.

52. Ibid, p. 59.

53. Noth does not give his reasons for identifying the אלהי אבי as Jacob. H. Seebass, Der Erzvater Israel, pp. 9-11 discusses this at length and concludes that it refers to Jacob-Israel.

54. For the change of the sanctuary from Shechem to Bethel, Noth, U Pent., p. 87, follows Alt's hypothesis that Gen. 35, 1-5 represents a pilgrimage and cultic rite connected with the transfer of the amphictyonic sanctuary ('Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel', KS i, pp. 79-88).

55. M. Noth, U Pent., p. 99.

56. Ibid, pp. 100-103.

57. Ibid, pp. 103-108.

58. Ibid, p. 109, for an 'itinerary' as a means of connecting sagas and saga complexes cf. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 237ff.

59. Ibid, pp, 113f. 120.

60. Ibid, p. 116. cf. p. 120.

61. Ibid, pp. 116-117.

62. Ibid, pp. 118-120.

63. Ibid, pp. 120-123.

64. Ibid, p. 124.

65. Ibid, p. 125.

66. Ibid, pp. 125-127.

67. M. Noth, U Pent, pp. 5f., does not accept the postulation of a 'Hexateuch', because for him, the book of Joshua does not have any connexion with the Pentateuch, but belongs to the larger context of the Deuteronomistic historical work. Noth limits himself to the 'Pentateuch', which for him comprises Gen. - Num. and Deut. 31-34. Noth differs from I. Engnell, 'Pentateuch', Critical Essays on the Old Testament, p. 58, in that while Engnell has only a Tetrateuch, Noth still uses the designation 'Pentateuch', in view of Deut. 31-34, which he thinks has been secondarily transposed to the end of the present book of Deuteronomy. This is the position which he had already taken in the introduction to his commentary, Das Buch Joshua, p. xiiif.

68. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 247-248.

69. Ibid, pp. 40-48.

70. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 25 expresses a similar view about the Elohist.

71. M. Noth, U Pent, pp. 248f.

72. Ibid, p. 256.

73. Ibid, p. 249

74. Ibid, pp. 256-259.

75. Ibid, p. 250

76. Ibid, p. 260.

77. Ibid, pp. 254, n. 619.

78. Ibid, pp. 259-267.

79. Ibid, p. 42.

80. J. Bright, Early Israel in recent history writing, p. 85.

81. G.E. Wright, 'Archaeology and Old Testament studies', JBL lxxvii (1958) p. 48.

82. See below pp. 45f.

83. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., p. 4.

84. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, pp. 19f.

85. This is against M. Noth, U Pent., p. 98, who assumes that Jacob was originally at home amongst the Ephraimites.

86. A. Jepsen, 'Zur Uberlieferungsgeschichte der Vätergestalten', WZ Leipzig, pp. 269-270.

87. This is a reverse process from that of Noth, U Pent., pp. 98f., who postulates the origin of the Jacob traditions amongst the west-Jordan Epraimites, which were later taken to the east-Jordan region by the Ephraimite colonists there.

88. A. Jepsen, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

89. Cf. A. Weiser, 'Isaak' RGG^3, Bd.iii, pp. 39ff., who expresses a similar idea.

90. A. Jepsen, op cit., pp. 271. 274-275.

91. Ibid, pp. 275-276.

92. A. Alt, op. cit., 58-60.

93. Ibid, p. 65.

94. Similarly, C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung ...', Forschung, p. 74, connects 'Promise' with the Abraham stories and 'Blessing' with the Jacob stories. H. Gross, 'Jakob der Mann des Segens', Biblica xlix (1968) pp. 333f., designates Abraham as the man of promises and Jacob as the man of blessing.

95. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 14.

96. The idea of 'Guidance' is least suited to the Isaac-traditions. It is Abraham and Jacob who are depicted as wandering the length and breadth of the Fertile Crescent, guided by their deities. Isaac, on the other hand, is prevented from moving out of the land of Promise (Gen. 26, 2; cf. 24, 7-8).

97. In the course of this article, Jepsen himself speaks of the promises made by the 'god of Isaac' to Jacob (op.cit., p. 274), and this points to the fact that such a neat division is not possible.

98. V. Maag, 'Malkût Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) p. 139 emphasizes that the distinctive feature of the nomadic god is that of leading.

99. L. Köhler, Old Testament Theology, p. 72.

100. C. Westermann, Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche, pp. 52-54.

101. A. Jepsen, op. cit., p. 278.

102. H. Seebass, Der Erzvater Israel und die Einfuhrung der Jahveverehrung in Kanaan. A similar view is expressed by V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels', Sch.Th.U. xxviii (1958) pp. 8f.; G.A. Danell, The name Israel in the Old Testament, pp. 28f.; K.T. Andersen, 'Der Gott meines Vaters', St. Th. xvi (1962) p. 181, agrees with Maag's identification of a separate tradition about a separate patriarch 'Israel' and says : 'Maag's thesis that a special 'Israel' patriarchal tradition existed is hardly to be disputed.'

103. Gen. 35, 10 is attributed to P by O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament : An Introduction, p. 189; W. Gross, 'Jakob der Mann des Segens', Biblica xlix (1968) pp. 329-330; H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 388; N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 14; M. Noth, UPent, p. 18; O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 549; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 333; Die Priesterschrift, pp. 25-27; A. Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 136.

104. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 1-10.

105. Ibid, p. 11.

106. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 45, rejects Noth's view (UPent, pp. 96f.) of the west-Jordan origin of the Jacob traditions. In this he is in agreement with Jepsen, 'Zur Uberlieferungsgeschichte der Vätergestalten', WZ Leipzig, iii (1953/54) p. 272.

107. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 13.

108. Ibid, p. 27.

109. Ibid, p. 24.

110. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 103, in agreement with Weiser, 'Isaak' RGG^3, iii, pp. 39f., attributes the theophany to Jacob in 46, 1-3 to the Isaac traditions. Weiser emphasizes that Jacob received this promise precisely as a member of the Isaac group.

111. H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 77f.

112. Ibid., pp. 106f.

113. Ibid, pp. 49-55.

114. H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 53ff., following K.T. Andersen, op. cit., pp. 185f., says that this is attested by the name which Moses gave to his son, אֱלִיעֶזֶר, which is interpreted as אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי בְּעֶזְרִי 'The God of my father was my help' (Ex. 18, 4). The saving god here is the 'god of the father'.

115. H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 65, 85.

116. It is difficult to accept Seebass's statement that Yahweh was not bound to a place, since Yahweh is already localized at the Sinai sanctuary in the Kenite tradition. In this he follows Alt (see above p. 8, n. 28). Seebass attempts to answer this difficulty by saying that the Sinai traditions and the Midianite traditions were not originally connected (op. cit., p. 77, n. 115). M. Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite tribes in Palestine, p. 105, on the other hand, points out that Yahweh is a God connected with a place.

117. H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 76-80.

118. Ibid, p. 20; See above n. 103.

119. Th.C. Vriezen points out that the desire for posterity is a common human motif. See above p. 10 and n. 35.

120. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 65. See above p. 9.

121. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 53.

122. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 81.

123. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen an die drei Erzväter.

124. W. Staerk, Studien zur Religions- und Sprachgeschichte des Alten Testaments, pp. 21ff.

125. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

126. The special vocabulary of the E-S group is אל שדי , קהל עמים , אחזת עולם , ארץ מגורים , פדה , מלכים (J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., p. 6, n. 3). The special vocabulary of Gen. xv group is ברך 'blessing' 12,3; 18,18; 22,18; 26,4; 28,14; Niph'al ונברך 12,3; 18,18; 28,14; Hithpa'el 22,18; 26,4 (p. 8).

127. In postulating a single source for the material different from that of the E-S group, Hoftijzer expresses a similar view to that of Volz who rejects the E source altogether as a separate source (P. Volz and W. Rudolf, Der Elohist als Erzähler, ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik ? BZAW lxiii (1933).

128. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., pp. 41. 55.

129. Ibid, pp. 83ff. Hoftijzer does not appreciate the difference between Noth and von Rad, see below p. 39.

130. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., p. 84.

131. Ibid, p. 85, n. 8. Ex. 15, 2; Deut. 1.11. 21; 4,1; 6,3; 27,3; I Chron. 28,9; 29,10 (cf. v.13). 20; 2 Chron. 28,9; 33, 12; 34,32. Also cf. Ex. 18,4 where אלי from the name אליעזר, is explained as אבי אלהי, and in the above-mentioned passages in 2 Chron. where the expression 'god of the fathers' appears to be synonymous with the God of Israel.

132. Ibid, pp. 86-90.

133. Ibid, pp. 90-94.

134. Ibid, pp. 94-97.

135. Ibid, pp. 97-99.

136. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 183.

137. See above p. 4.

138. V. Maag, 'Malkût Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) p. 140-141, n. 2, also says that Hoftijzer does not succeed in his traditio-historical method and comments that 'his attempts to raise opposition against Alt leads him into a jungle of traditio-historical and religio-historical improbabilities.'

139. Cf. M. Noth's review of J. Hoftijzer's book in VT vii (1957) pp. 432ff.

140. H. Weidmann, Die Patriarchen und ihre Religion, p. 167.

141. Cf. P. Ackroyd's review of von Rad's Genesis in ET lxxiii (1961) p. 12. Similar comments in J.L. Mckenzies' review in CBQ xxiv (1962) pp. 73-74, and in J.S. Bowden's review in JTS xiii (1962) pp. 256-360. D.N. Freedman, in his review in Theology Today xx (1963) pp. 114-118.

says that von Rad is 'a worthy successor of Wellhausen, Gunkel and Alt, to each of whom he is explicity indebted.'

142. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. i, p. 168.

143. For the process of the loosening of the old traditions from their cultic associations, see below p. 41.

144. G. von Rad, Theology vol. i, p. 167.

145. G. von Rad, 'The form-critical problem of the Hexateuch', The Problem of the Hexateuch and other essays, pp. 53ff.

146. A. Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 86, objects to the separation, on the basis of the little creed, of the Sinai and the Settlement traditions as belonging to different cultic centres. He argues that both the traditions were connected together from the beginning and suggests two reasons for the omission of the Sinai tradition in the little creed : (i) The creed mentions only historical events like the Exodus and the entry into Canaan. As the Sinai tradition is not a historical event, it is omitted. (ii) The creed recites only the saving acts, and as the Sinai tradition is not directly a saving act, it is omitted. M. Noth, U Pent., p. 43 also emphasizes that the Sinai tradition was part of the Pentateuchal traditions of the early Israelite amphictyony.

147. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 22.

148. Ibid, p. 95.

149. Ibid, pp. 160, 209f.

150. R.N. Whybray, 'The Joseph story and Pentateuchal criticism' VT xviii (1968) pp. 525ff., points out that although von Rad proposes that the Joseph story belongs to the Wisdom literature (Genesis, pp. 432-434), he does not break himself away from attributing it to the Yahwist. Cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 345, where he says that from Gen. 37,3 onwards 'the predominantly Yahwistic narrative begins.'

151. G. von Rad, Theology, Vol. i, p. 166, n.3.

152. C. Carmichael, 'A new view of the origin of the Deuteronomic credo', VT xi (1969) p. 276ff.

153. B.S. Childs, 'Deuteronomic formulae of the Exodus traditions', SVT xvi (1967) p. 39.

154. L. Rost, 'Das kleine geschichtliche Credo', Das Kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alten Testament, pp. 11ff.

155. G. von Rad, Theology, Vol. i, pp. 173-174; cf. also his 'History of the Patriarchs', ET lxxii (1961-62) pp. 213ff.

156. See above pp. 19f.

157. Cf. also the Yahwist's story of Jacob's wrestling with a deity at Penuel (Gen. 32, 22-32), and Yahweh's encounter with Moses in Ex. 4, 24-26. It may be argued that such traditions were taken from the non-Israelite traditions, but the fact that the Yahwist allows them to remain in his account points to his approval of such ideas.

158. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 24-25.

159. See below, p. 95.

160. L. Rost, 'Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen', SVT, vii (1960) pp. 346-359.

161. Ibid, pp. 346-347.

162. Ibid, pp. 350-352.

163. Similarly, O. Eissfeldt, 'Jakobs Begegnung mit El und Moses Begegnung mit Jahwe', KS iv (1968) pp. 96f., conceives of two migrations to Shechem.

164. L. Rost, 'Gottesverehrung ... ', pp. 353-356.

165. Ibid, pp. 349-350.

166. MT has only שדי but some manuscripts, 𝔐 G and S add ואל .

167. L. Rost, 'Gottesverehrung ...', pp. 356-357.

168. Ibid, p. 357.

169. Ibid, 357-358.

170. See above p. 50.

171. See above p. 48. Also cf. I. Blythin, op. cit., p. 72 who observes that the divine name אל עליון (Gen. 14,19) and אל שדי (28,3) are both associated with the root ברך .

172. See above p. 9.

173. O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament : An Introduction, p. 4.

174. O. Eissfeldt, 'Die Schichten des Hexateuch als vornehmste Quelle für den Aufriss einer israelitisch-jüdischen Kultgeschichte' KS Vol. i, p. 35.

175. Here Eissfeldt has a different assessment of the designations פחד יצחק and אביר יעקב than that of Alt, who considered them to be designations of the special 'gods of the fathers', connected with Isaac and Jacob, the founders of these cults. See above p. 6.

176. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der Gott Bethel', KS Vol. i, 206-233.

177. O. Eissfeldt, Introduction, p. 43.

178. See below, pp. 59f.

179. O. Eissfeldt, 'Jahwe der Gott der Väter', KS Vol. iv, pp. 83-84. cf. also 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) pp. 30-31.

180. O. Eissfeldt, 'Jakobs Begegnung mit El und Moses Begegnung mit Jahwe', KS Vol. iv, pp. 96-97.

181. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) p. 37.

182. O. Eissfeldt, 'Particularismus und Universalismus in der israelitischjüdischen Religionsgeschichte', ThLZ lxxix (1954) cols. 283f.

183. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) pp. 27-29.

184. O. Eissfeldt, 'Jahwe der Gott der Väter', KS iv, pp. 83.90.

185. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) p. 32.

186. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der Kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Erzvätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitz-Verheissungen', WZ Halle xvii (1968) pp. 45-53.

187. Ibid, p. 46.

188. Ibid, pp. 46-47.

189. Ibid, pp. 48-50.

190. Ibid, pp. 50-52.

191. O. Eissfeldt, 'Die Schichten der Hexateuch als vornehmste Quelle für den Aufriss einer israelitisch-jüdischen Kultgeschichte', KS Vol. i, p. 37.

192. O. Eissfeldt, Introduction, pp. 194-198.

193. Ibid, pp. 199-200; cf. also O. Eissfeldt, 'Sinaierzählung und Bileam-Sprüche, HUCA xxxii (1961) pp. 188-190; and 'Die Komposition der Bileam-Erzählung', ZAW lvii (1939) pp. 236-238.

194. O. Eissfeldt, Introduction, pp. 201-203.

195. Ibid, 204-208.

196. O. Eissfeldt, 'Genesis' IDB Vol. A, p. 374.

197. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', Old Testament History and Religion, p. 50; cf. H. Weidmann, op. cit., p. 159.

198. K.T. Andersen, 'Der Gott meines Vaters', St.Th. xvi (1962) p. 182.

199. See above p. 9.

200. L. Köhler, Theology, p. 72.

201. See above, pp. 10f.

202. V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels', Sch.Th.U xxviii (1958) p.3 S.H. Hooke, Myth, Ritual and Kingship, p. 13 has a similar view of the origin of the religion of Israel. Cf. also ThC. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel, p. 9.

203. V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels', Sch.Th.U. xxviii (1958) pp. 3-4.

204. Ibid, p. 5, n. 13. Maag makes Gen. 22, 6ff an exception to this observation and says that it deals with a problem connected with the taking over of the Moriah sanctuary by the worshippers of the 'god of the fathers'. The offering of the first-born is connected with tenant peasantry. cf. Ibid, 'Erwägungen zur Deuteronomischen Kultzentralization', VT vi (1956) p. 14 where Maag attributes עולה to the settled land culture and זבח to the Steppe-Shepherd culture.

205. Ibid, pp. 5-6.

206. Ibid, p. 9.

208. Ibid, pp. 11-13.

209. Ibid, pp. 13-14.

210. Ibid, 15-21.

211. Ibid, p. 21.

212. Ibid, p. 22.

213. V. Maag, 'Malkut Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) pp. 129-153.

214. Ibid, p. 135.

215. Ibid, p. 137.

216. Ibid, pp. 139-141.

217. cf. G.W. Ahlstrom, Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion, p. 11, n. 1. Also see below pp.

218. I. Engnell, 'Old Testament Religion', Essays, pp. 35-49.

219. Ibid, p. 36. Cf. Also 'The Science of Religion', Essays, p. 18.

220. I. Engnell, 'Old Testament Religion', Essays, pp. 37-39.

221. H. Schmidt, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, pp. 10-12 points out that the concept of צדק is also derived from Canaan.

222. I. Engnell, 'Old Testament Religion', Essays, pp. 39-45.

223. A. Alt, 'The origins of the Israelite Law', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 98. Here Alt is speaking in connexion with the Casuistic law, but this could equally apply to the Canaanite religion as well.

224. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers' Essays on History and Religion, p. 65.

225. L. Köhler, Theology, pp. 71f.

226. G. Fohrer, 'Die wiederentdekte kanaanäische Religion', Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Geschichte 1949-1966, BZAW cxv (1969) pp. 10-11.

227. See below p.237.

228. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel, pp. 318f.

229. See above p. 2.

230. M. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 123.

231. W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra, p.6.

232. J. Bright, Early Israel in recent history writing, p. 82. cf. W.F. Albright, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology, BASOR lxxiv (1939) p. 23.

233. J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 93.

234. G.E. Wright, 'Modern Issues in Biblical Studies : History and the Patriarchs', ET lxxi (1959-60) pp. 295f., supports Bright's view against that of Noth.

235. J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 69.

236. J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 70.

237. Ibid, pp. 78-82.

238. Ibid, pp. 82-86.

239. Ibid, pp. 86-90.

240. Ibid, pp. 71-72. Cf. also R.de Vaux, Die Patriarchenerzählungen und die Geschichte, p. 30.

241. Ibid, pp. 72-74. 78-79. For the Benjamites cf. also M. Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine, pp. 110-123.

242. See above p. 76.

243. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, ed. C. Westermann, pp. 89-122.

244. Ibid. pp. 90f.

245. Ibid, p. 94.

246. See above p. 40.

247. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment' pp. 90-93.

248. Ibid, pp. 92-93.

249. Ibid, p. 93 Cf. also W. Zimmerli, Man and his Hope in the Old Testament, p. 63.

250. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', p. 94.

251. W. Zimmerli, Hope, p. 51.

252. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment' pp. 95-97.

253. G. Westermann, 'The way of promise through the Old Testament', The Old Testament and Christian faith, ed. B.W. Anderson, p. 201.

254. W. Zimmerli, 'Abraham und Melchisedek', Das ferne und nahe Wort, BZAW cv (1967) p. 253, makes a similar observation about the Abraham tradition in Gen. 14, 18-20. Zimmerli notes that the root ברך occurs three times in this brief passage.

255. W. Zimmerli, Hope, p. 50.

256. K.T. Andersen, 'Der Gott meines Vaters' St.Th. xvi (1962) p. 188 briefly notes parallels between the Jacob and the Moses traditions. Also see below p. 227.

257. Cf. H. Gross, 'Zum Problem Verheissung und Erfüllung' BZ NF iii (1959) p. 12, who speaks of the world-wide blessing in the promise to Abraham standing in opposition to the world-wide curse of Gen. 3-11.

258. G. von Rad, 'The form-critical problem of the Hexateuch', The Problem, p. 65.

259. S.F.G. Brandon, History, Time and Deity, pp. 126f.

260. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 66.

261. R. Rendtorff, 'Hermeneutische Probleme der biblischen Urgeschichte', Festschrift, für F. Smend, p. 22.

262. C. Westermann, Genesis, I, pp. 23f.

263. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung am Alten Testament, pp. 9-91.

264. P. Volz and W. Rudolph, Der Elohist als Erzähler, ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik ?, BZAW lxiii (1933).

265. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung .....', Forschung, p. 11. Westermann himself does not fully relate his discussion to the documentary sources. He is more interested in the themes and the Sitz im Leben of the different narratives than in their relation to the sources. He does, however, accept the sources of the documentary hypothesis. W. Schmidt, ThLZ xci (1966) cols. 27f., regrets that Westermann does not work out the implications of his method in terms of the documentary sources except for a brief statement on p. 13.

266. H. Gunkel, Genesis^{3}, p. xlvii. C. Westermann, Forschung, p. 41.

267. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung ... ', Forschung, pp. 17-18.

268. Ibid, p. 19.

269. Ibid, pp. 19-24.

270. Ibid, p. 25. But this argument on the basis of a hapax legomenon, is not convincing, because the literature preserved in the Old Testament does not exhaust the whole range of the language current at any particular period of Israel's history. The single occurrence of a word does not prove its antiquity. However, the close relationship between blessing and promise can still be maintained without appealing to the antiquity of this expression.

271. Here Westermann follows W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', Interpretation, p. 92, who pointed out the importance of blessing in the initial promise to Abraham (Gen. 12, 1-3). Cf. C. Westermann, 'The way of promise through the Old Testament', The Old Testament and Christian faith, pp. 210f.

272. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung...', Forschung, pp. 25-26.

273. Ibid, pp. 27-32.

274. C. Westermann, Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche, pp. 11-13.

275. Ibid, pp. 14-16.

276. Ibid, pp. 16-18.

277. Ibid, pp. 18-21.

278. Ibid, pp. 21-22.

279. Ibid, p. 22. On pp. 23-31 Westermann surveys various writers on Old Testament theology, and points out that only a few authors have given importance to the concept of blessing in their writings. Dillmann, Schulz, Smend, Kittel and Sell do not have any reference to blessing. Eichrodt mentions it occasionally but does not draw out its significance. König and Procksch have only occasional reference to it. Vriezen mentions blessing only a couple of times. Von Rad does not find much significance in this idea. Westermann says that the absence of the idea of blessing in the theology of von Rad may be explained from the fact that for von Rad blessing is included within the concept of salvation. God's saving deeds include deliverance and blessing, and thus there exists no tension between these two ideas for von Rad. He uses them interchangeably. Only Ludwig Köhler has seen the significance of the basic distinction of the 'deliverance' acts of God from his 'blessing' acts. They are connected with the cultural contexts through which Israel has passed. The settlement in Canaan necessitated the expression of the continued blessing activity of God as distinct from the periodic delivering activity of God and his promise within nomadic culture. But Köhler does not work out the full implications of this distinction. Johannes Pedersen has a whole chapter on blessing. For him, the primary power of blessing is in the fruitfulness of the family, the fields and the herds and in success in battle.

Podersen believes that 'Wisdom' is connected with blessing, which gives the power of effectiveness and success. Thus, blessing signifies vital power in its deepest and most comprehensive sense. Although Pedersen has a detailed treatment of the concept of blessing, he only sets out the ideas connected with blessing but does not trace the tradition-history behind those happenings which are connected with blessing. S. Mowinckel emphasizes the significance of blessing for the cult. Through the cult and its rites blessing is created, established and increased for the community as well as for the individual. It includes both material and spiritual elements. It is the basic power of life itself. Mowinckel also points out the relation of blessing to the creative activity of God. Israel encountered Yahweh in the cult as the one who creates and gives life and blessing and thereby preserves the world. Westermann points out that the Old Testament idea of God's blessing extends far beyond the limits of the cult and that this had not been made clear by Mowinckel. J. Hempel approaches the question from the point of view of the religio-historical school, which is especially interested in the development from a magical to a religio-ethical stage and relies more on the literary documents of other religions than on the Old Testament cult. Hempel has a whole chapter on 'Blessing and curse as deeds of Yahweh'. Westermann points out that blessing and curse are not always parallel to each other in such immediate and direct connexion with the works of Yahweh. Whilst the term 'the blessings/a blessing of Yahweh' are frequent, the expression 'the curses/ a curse of Yahweh' never occurs in the Old Testament. Curse has never been theologized in Israel in the same manner as blessing.

280. G. Wehmeier, Der Segen im Alten Testament, p. 218, observes that the 'speech of blessing' occurs less frequently in the early prophetical books and that it appears again in the Exilic and the post-Exilic prophets, though even there only incidentally.

281. C. Westermann, Der Segen, pp. 34-43. Cf. also Job. 28 and Prov. 8 for the connection of wisdom with creation and blessing.

282. Ibid, pp. 52-54.

283. Ibid, p. 55.

284. Ibid, pp. 56-58.

285. C. Westermann, 'Das Verhältnis des Jahweglaubens zu den ausser-israelitischen Religionen', Forschung, pp. 189-218.

286. Ibid, pp. 204-205.

287. Ibid, pp. 210-211

288. Ibid, pp. 211-212.

289. G. von Rad, 'The form-critical problem of the Hexateuch', The Problem, pp. 50-63.

290. G. Wehmeier, Der Segen im Alten Testament, p. 205, points out that E avoids the word 'blessing' in his account except where he is forced to retain it by the narrative construction. E omits the blessing idea in the Balaam pericope and, instead, introduces prophetic features into it.

291. See below pp. 224-225.

292. G. von Rad, 'The form-critical problem of the Hexateuch', The problem, pp. 63-67.

293. See above p. 46.

S E C T I O N - II. N O T E S.

1. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. i, p. 167. Similarly B. Gemser, 'Questions concerning the religion of the fathers', Adhuc Loquitur, p. 58, says that the idea of promise is 'the nervous system' which unites the patriarchal narratives into 'an organism and activates them'.

2. C. Westermann, 'The way of promise through the Old Testament', The Old Testament and Christian Faith, p. 201, attributes this method to Zimmerli who in fact follows von Rad's method of giving importance to the context in Old Testament exegesis.

3. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 161. 163, considers this passage to be the composition of the Yahwist; A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 65, n. 176, says that in these verses the Yahwist introduces the theme of the whole of the patriarchal history; cf. also, ibid, p. 64; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 160 terms this one of the transitional passages created by the Yahwist in order to unite the larger sections together; U Pent., p. 256, n. 622, maintains that this has been formulated by the Yahwist; W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 91, suggests that this passage was probably composed de novo by the Yahwist; H. Wolff, 'Kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation xx (1966) p. 154 says that the Yahwist presents these words to Israel as a message from God and as a challenge to the people of the Solomonic kingdom; C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, p. 73, classifies this as one of the theological passages which are not exact narratives but passages joining together the stories of the patriarchs; J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen an die drei Erzväter, p. 14, assigns it to his 'Genesis xv group' (which is equivalent to JE) and says that this has been secondarily introduced; G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 161 assigns vv. 1-2. 4a to his nomadic source N, which, according to him, is prior to J and E. Interestingly

enough, he does not assign verse 3, which contains a blessing for all peoples, to any source; O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, p. 199, also assigns it to the Yahwist.

4. G. von Rad, 'The form-critical problem of the Hexateuch', The problem of the Hexateuch and other essays, pp. 65-67.

5. C. Westermann, .'Arten der Erzählung,' Forschung, p. 40.

6. H-P. Müller, Ursprünge und Strukturen Alttestamentlicher Eschatologie, BZAW cix (1969) p. 56.

7. H-P. Müller, 'Imperativ und Verheissung im Alten Testament, Drei Beispiele', Ev.Th. xxviii (1968) pp. 559-560; W.M. Clark, 'The righteousness of Noah' VT xxi (1971) p. 275, points out that in Gen. 12, 1-3 a command followed by promise incorporates a further command to be a blessing to all peoples. Clark finds a similar pattern of command followed by promise in the Noah story also (Gen. 7, 1ff.)

8. Gesenius-Kautzsch, A. Hebrew Grammar, § 119 s.

9. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 96; C.H. Dodd, The authority of the Bible, p. 142, indicates that the voice in this revelation may have been mediated by economic reasons but that only the divine initiative is mentioned.

10. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 168.

11. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 217ff. : H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 163. (cf. also p. 157), makes the interesting observation that Abraham is asked to go forth not from his city but from his land ; cf. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 96; J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel, p. 342. J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 81, points out that the name Ur is omitted in the LXX, but says that 24,4. 7 show that Abraham's birth-place was in Upper Mesopotamia.

12. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 96.

13. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op cit., § 58 i. The dagesh in the נ is the nun energicum.

14. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 83 says that the land-promise recedes in this passage and that the blessing motif comes into the fore-ground.

15. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 164 and 166.

16. G. von Rad, 'Promised land and Yahweh's land', The Problem, p. 84; Genesis, p. 161.

17. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 65.

18. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation, xx (1966) p. 140.

19. M. Noth, U Pent, pp. 59 and 88.

20. G. von Rad, Theology, vol. i, pp. 168 and 170.

21. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 108d. The cohortative depending with ו on an imperative or jussive expresses an intention or intended consequence, e.g., Gen. 24, 7 'Bring me וְאֵלְכָה that I may eat', lit. 'then I will eat'.

22. Ibid, § 110 i, The imperative when depending (with ו copulative) upon a jussive (cohortative) sentence, frequently expresses also a consequence which is to be expected with certainty, and often a consequence which is intended or a fact or intention.

23. A. Cody, 'When is the chosen people called gôy?' VT xiv (1964) p. 1, points out that לְגוֹי points to Israel as she grows into the status of a nation.

24. C. Westermann, 'The way of promise...', The Old Testament and Christian Faith, p. 210.

25. W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 92; similarly, G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 155 notes the five-fold use of the word 'blessing' in this passage but he does not draw out its theological implications. He says that it is a pre-Israelite idea which is retained in the cultic vocabulary.

26. H-P Muller, Ursprünge und Strukturen., BZAW, cix (1969) pp. 138-140. 162-166 and 169.

27. C. Westermann, Der Segen, pp. 55-56.

28. Koehler - Baumgartner, Lexicon, pp. 152a-154, separates ברך I, 'knee' from ברך II, 'to bless'. Cf. J. Scharbert, 'Fluchen und Segen im Alten Testament', Biblica xxxix (1958) p. 17; A. Murtonen, 'The use and meaning of the words l^{e}bārek and b^{e}rākāh in the Old Testament', VT ix (1959) pp. 176f; W. Schottroff, Der altisraelitische Fluchspruch, p. 178.

29. Fr. Delitzsch, Prolegomena eines neuen hebräisch - aramäischen Wörterbuchs zum Alten Testament, p. 46, n. 2.

30. M. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, p. 195.

30a. C. Gordon, Ugaritic Text Book, 7b, II, 18, p. 182.

31. G. Wehmeier, Der Segen im Alten Testament, pp. 8-17.

32. J. Pedersen, Israel, I/II, pp. 204-209. p. 518, n. 204.

33. A. Murtonen, op. cit., pp. 155-177.

34. J. Plassmann, The signification of B^{e}rākā, pp. 88-89.

35. J. Chelhod, 'La baraka chez les Arabes ou l'influence bienfaisante du sacré', RHR cxlviii (1955) p. 78.

36. G. Wehmeier, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

37. J. Pedersen, op. cit., pp. 205ff.

38. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 155; cf. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 96, says that memory of the name of Abraham will remain in the minds of people and not that of the tower; cf. P. Altmann, Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Testament, BZAW xcii (1964) p. 10.

39. See above n. 22. Cf. also J. Holzinger, Genesis, p. 137.

40. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation xx (1966) p. 137, n. 28; D.N. Freedman, 'Notes on Genesis', ZAW lxiv (1952) p. 193, on the other hand, suggests reading וְאֶהְיֶה 1st person singular, imperfect Hiph'il, with 3rd masculine singular suffix, 'and I will cause it to become a blessing' and says that the א has been lost in pronunciation and that the final ה is also not indicated in the spelling. This suggestion is too hypothetical and is rightly rejected by Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abraham-überlieferungen, p. 2. n. 4.

41. J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 244.

42. Koehler - Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 840; BDB, Lexicon, p. 86.

43. In Gen. 27, 29c and Num. 24,9 the plural אֹרְרֶיךָ is used alongside the plural of those who bless מְבָרְכֶיךָ .

44. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation, xx (1966) p. 145.

45. It is generally agreed that the blessing story in Gen. 27 is a very old tradition. Westermann says that it belongs to a period before Yahweh had met Israel, and he finds several magical features which connect the story with Canaanite religion and culture. See above pp. 97-98.

46. H-P. Muller, Ursprünge and Struktruren, p. 53, n. 105.

47. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 156 says that the passive meaning is possible.

48. J. Schreiner, 'Segen für die Völker in der Verheissung an die Väter', BZ NF vi (1962) p. 7.

49. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 165; B. Albrektson, History and the Gods, pp. 79-81, also argues for a reflexive meaning here on the basis of Hithpa'el in other passages.

50. A.B. Ehrlich, Randglossesn zur Hebräischen Bibel, vol. i, p. 47.

51. G. Wehmeier, op. cit., p. 179.

52. O Procksch, Genesis, pp. 96.

53. G. Wehmeier, op. cit., pp. 177-180.

54. H. Junker, 'Segen als heilsgeschichtliches Motivwort im Alten Testament', Sacra Pagina, vol. i, p. 553.

55. See below pp. 222f.

56. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation, xx (1966) pp. 133. 153ff.

57. P. Altmann, Erzählungstheologie, pp. 10-11.

58. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation xx (1966) p. 151.

59. Except in Gen. 13, 15 (J) and 17, 18 (P) all the other passages confine the promise of the land to the descendants alone.

60. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 98.

61. A. Alt, 'God of the fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, pp. 59f.

62. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 166.

63. M. Noth, U Pent, p. 217.

64. R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, pp. 301-305.

65. J. Wellhausen, Die Composition, p. 24.

66. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 176, states further that the promise of land belongs to a time when the possession of the land of Canaan had become doubtful for Israel. Cf. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., pp. 16f.; who also thinks that this passage has been secondarily added. So also C.A. Simpson, The Early Traditions of Israel, p. 72. Cf. H. Holzinger, Genesis, p. 141; J. Skinner, Genesis, pp. 253ff.

67. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 167f.; cf. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 20, n. 36, who agrees with von Rad. H. Gunkel, Genesis,[1] p. 161 says that Lot is perhaps originally not the father of Moab at all but the ancestor of the Horite primeval people (Gen. 36,29). But he omits this comment in his 3rd edition. He regards the whole narrative as originally 'novellistich'.

68. R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, pp. 29-35. However, Kilian considers verses 15-17 to belong to the Yahwistic Grundschicht, pp. 24f.

69. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 66.

70. See above p.103, n. 7.

71. For Hoftijzer's E-S group and Gen. xv group, see above p. 35.

72. M. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 122.

73. See above p. 14.

74. BDB, Lexicon, p. 282, notes that עַתָּה is used in connection with the patriarchs, especially in the stories of Abraham, and that it is more frequent in J.

75. C. Westermann, 'The way of promise through the Old Testament', The Old Testament and Christian Faith, pp. 208-209.

76. הִנֵּה NEB 'Now'.

77. קום התהלך Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 120 g. The co-ordination of the complementary verbal idea in the finite verb frequently occurs with the second verb (which represents the principal idea) in the same mood, attached without the copula.

78. This idea is expressed by Noth and Von Rad. See above p.14 and p.41.

79. ' Baal travels from cities to cities, turns from towns to towns, assumes possession of sixty-six cities', cf. C.Gordon, Ugaritic Text Book, Text 51, VII, 7-9, p.173. G.R.Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, pp.100f., translates the last verb aḥd as 'seize' but aḥd can also have the sense of 'take possession of' (cf. e.g. BDB, Lexicon, p. 38 and G.R.Driver, op. cit., p. 134 where the sense of 'occupied' as well as 'seized' are given).

80. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 120f.

81. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 268; M.Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine, p.94, says that'it stands like an outcrop of rock in the middle of the Abraham narratives with which it has, of course, certain features in common, but on the whole it depicts the "patriarch" differently from the main line of the tradition'; O.Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, pp. 211., says that'it presupposes the already complete compilation L+J+E+B+D+H+P and that it has been inserted into it'. Similarly C.Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 73, says that it had been joined very late to the Abraham cycle. So also R.E.Clements, Abraham and David, p. 25.

82. G. von Rad, Genesis, p.170.

83. M. Noth, 'Jerusalem and the Israelite tradition', The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, p. 133; U Pent., p. 170, cf. also p.29, n.84.

84. J. Scharbert, Review article on R. Kilian's Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, ThZ xii (1960) p. 265.

85. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, pp. 84-88.

86. W. Zimmerli, 'Abraham und Melchisedek', Das ferne und nahe Wort, BZAW cv (1967) pp. 256-257. Cf. R. Rendtorff, 'El, Baal und Jahwe', ZAW lxxviii (1966) 277-292 who argues that 'El Elyon the creator of heaven and earth' cannot refer to the Canaanite El-deity.

87. W.H. Schmidt, Alttestamentlicher Glaube und seine Umwelt, p. 25.

88. E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 47, n. 2 says that the equation of יהוה with אל עליון must have seemed too bold for the author of the LXX.

89. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 288.

90. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 175.

91. I. Engnell, 'The Old Testament Religion', Critical Essays on the Old Testament, p. 36.

92. See below p. 232.

93. See below p. 223f.

94. G.W. Ahlström, Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion, pp. 11. 17 and 88.

95. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 120, points out that the tithes regulation is connected with the Canaanite autumnal festival. Cf. also R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 34, n. 46.

96. J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 23, reckons with an Elohistic basis for vv. 1-6, with a revision of the section by J, and assigns the rest to J. But he considers vv. 13-16 to be a later addition;

H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 177f., assigns vv 1a (without בְּמַמְרֵא). 2a. 3b. 4. 6. 9. 10. 12a. 12b. (without וְשָׁכַח גְּדוֹלָה) to Jb vv. 1a בְּמַמְרֵא. 1b. 3a. 5. 11. 12a. 13-16 to E and the rest to the redactor; W. Eichrodt, Quellen der Genesis, pp. 62ff, J : 2, 7-17. 18; E : 1. 3-6; O. Eissfeldt, Hexateuchsynopse, Ja : 1b. 2a. 7-12 (without וְשָׁכַח גְּדוֹלָה) 17-18; E : 1a. 3-6 (at times with secondary יהוה). 13 (without 400 years). 14(15). 16. 19-21. O. Procksch, Genesis, pp. 107f., with whom Alt, 'The God of the fathers', History and Religion, p. 65, n. 175, associates himself in essentials, considers vv. 1a and b (till לְךָ). 3-4. 8-12a. 17-18a to belong to J and vv. 2. 5-6. 12b. 13a. 14a. 16 to E; J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 276, finds many traces of Deuteronomistic revision and sees the possibility of an Elohistic basis which has been reworked by a Jehovistic or Deuteronomistic editor, possibly R^{JE}. But he does not attempt a detailed analysis of the chapter; M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 29. 32. 122 attributes to J vv. 1a. 2a. 3b. 4. 6-12. 17. 18. (19-21) and to E vv. 1b. 3a. 5. 13a (13b). 14a (14b). 15f., and says that this chapter is not only literary-critically very difficult to analyse, but also has a very complicated tradition-history. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 177 observes that there are too many contradictions in the chapter to think of it as an organic narrative unit. He assigns vv. 1-6 to E and vv. 7-12 and 17-18 to J and calls vv. 13-16 'a long interpolation probably from E : C.A. Simpson, op. cit., pp. 73f., holds vv. 1-7 to be an early post-Exilix polemic against the inhabitants of the land and the kernel of vv. 8-21 to be a secondarily developed Yahwistic narrative; A. Jepsen, 'Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Vätergestalten', WZ Leipzig, iii (1953-1954) pp. 278f., holds that vv. 1-6. 7-12. 17-18 belong to the original tradition to which vv. 13-16 has been added by J; R.E. Clements Abraham and David, p. 21, considers the whole chapter to be a unity derived from the Yahwist, except for vv. 13-16. 18c. and 20-21, which are later additions. J. Hoftijzer, op. cit., pp. 17-23, especially n. 77, argues for an organic unity of the chapter and makes it the original basis of the promise group. However, he still considers v. 2 to be a possible revision.

97. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 251-252.

98. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, pp. 28. 35-50. Lohfink sees a close connexion between Gen. 14 and 15 and says that they originally belong to a period earlier than the Yahwist and that they were later taken over by the Yahwist and the Elohist into their accounts. He gives several reasons for postulating such an original connexion between Gen. 14 and 15, but he is not prepared to draw any definite conclusions about it.

99. אל־תירא is an oracle of assurance taken over from the context of the Holy War, and the reference to מגן (which is perhaps an allusion to מגן in 14,20) and to reward (שכר) immediately after a chapter about a battle and magananimous behaviour on the part of Abraham in refusing the booty, seems to come as compensation offered by Yahweh to Abraham. Thus, 15, 1 may have been added as a conclusion to chapter 14 by the person who inserted it here. אחר הדברים האלה connects 15, 1 with chapter 14. Moreover, the idea of reward, which is absent in the patriarchal narratives, is also perhaps an indication that Gen. 15,1 may be a later insertion. See below pp. 127-128 for a discussion of the Heilsorakel formula.

100. A command in the imperative precedes the promises in the patriarchal narratives, but where the narrative construction does not have an imperative, the author supplies אל־תירא from a Heilsorakel formula (Gen. 15, 1; 46,3.) See below p. 128.

101. J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 24.

102. R. Kraetzschmar, Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, pp. 60f.

103. O. Kaiser, 'Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Genesis 15', ZAW lxx (1958) pp. 123-124.

104. J. Dus, 'Der Jakobbund Gen. 15, 8ff.', ZAW lxxx (1968) pp. 36-38.

105. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, pp. 86-87.

106. N. Nielsen, Shechem, pp. 342-344.

107.

107. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 120 and 252, n. 610.

108. See above pp. 10f.

109. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, pp. 27f.; cf. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) p. 36; 'Genesis', IDB ii, p. 376.

110. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', History and Religion, p. 60.

111. See above pp. 119 and 125.

112. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 179, 'The narrator leaves the star-gazing man, so to speak, and turns to the reader to whom he communicates theological opinions of great theological compactness.....'.

113. Ibid, p. 181.

114. O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 108.

115. L.A. Snijders, 'Gen. xv : The covenant with Abraham', OTS xii (1958) p. 260.

116. G. von Rad, 'Der heilige Krieg im Alten Israel', pp. 11ff.

117. J. Begrich, 'Das Priesterliche Heilsorakel', Gesammelte Studien, pp. 217-231.

118. H.M. Dion, 'The patriarchal traditions and the literary form of the oracle of salvation', CBQ xxix (1967) pp. 198-206.

119. For the connexion of command with promise and blessing see below p. 213

120. G.A.F. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, pp. 59-60.

121. G. von Rad, Theology, ii, pp. 80-98.

122. S. Mowinckel, Erkenntnis Gottes, p. 19.

123. Th.C. Vriezen, Theology, p. 94.

124. M. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung Als Eid, p. 57.

125. Cf. L. Rost, 'Die Gottesverehrung', SVT vii (1960) p. 351.

126. J. Lindblom, 'Theophanies in holy places in Hebrew religion', HUCA xxxii (1961) p. 95.

127. M. Dahood, Review of 'The Torah. The five books of Moses', Biblica xlv (1964) p. 282; see also Biblica xiv (1964) p. 129; cf. M. Kessler, 'The shield of Abraham', VT xiv (1964) pp. 494ff.; see also R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, p. 61.

128. M. Kessler, 'The shield of Abraham', VT xiv (1964) p. 479. אנכי הולך (Gen. 15, 2); אנכי ברית (16,8); אנכי דבר Jer. 32, 42.

129. J.B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 450.

130. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 131 q.

131. See above p. 103 and n. 6; cf. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, pp. 79-80, who refers to king Assurbanipal's prayers to the god Nabu, which begin abruptly with a prayer and are then followed by the divine promises : J.B. Pritchard, ANET, pp. 450f.

132. Koehler - Baumgartner, op. cit., p. 64; BDB, op. cit., p. 58 for אנכי without בלבב 'to think'.

133. Gesenius - Kautzsch, op. cit., § 116p. The subject is often introduced by הנה to announce that the event is imminent or at least near at hand and sure to happen.

134. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 177.

135. RSV has, in both places 'And Abraham said'.

136. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 177.

137. See above, p. 118 for the association of Lot with Abraham in Hebron.

138. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 34.

139. Indirect questions after verbs of inquiring, doubting, examining etc., cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 150 i.

140. C. Westermann, 'The way of promise', The Old Testament and Christian Faith, pp. 208-209.

141. Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 122 q.

142. E. Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament, p. 16, פתוחה is a closed paragraph separated from the previous paragraph by a short space within the line; cf. BHK, ad loc. (This is not indicated in BHS).

143. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 177; G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 180, 181 and 185. O. Kaiser, 'Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Gen. 15', ZAW lxx (1958) p. 117.

144. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 19f.

145. H.W. Heidland, Die Anrechnung des Glaubens zur Gerechtigkeit, BWANT 4. Folge, lxx, p. 97, n. 57 and n. 58.

146. G. von Rad, 'Faith reckoned as righteousness', The Problem, pp. 129-130.

147. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 19f.

148. Ibid, p. 22.

149. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 181.

150. R. Rendtorff, 'Die Offenbarungsvorstellungen im Alten Israel', Offenbarung als Geschichte, p. 33.

151. Cf. W. Zimmerli, 'Ich bin Jahwe', pp. 194-197.

152. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, p. 61. J. Weingreen, 'הוציאתיך in Gen. 15, 7', Words and meanings, pp. 214f., interprets הוציאתיך to mean 'I saved you' and אור as 'fire' and, on the basis of the Targum and Midrashic literature, translates : 'I saved you from the fiery furnace of the Chaldeans'. This is perhaps because of the Jewish scholars did not take Ur as a place name. LXX also translates it as χώρα and not as a place-name.

153. K. Elliger, Leviticus, p. 357.

154. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, pp. 61-62; cf. G. von Rad, 'The promised land and Yahweh's land in the Hexateuch', The Problem, p. 83; Noth, U Pent., p. 59.

155. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 153-154 and 181; cf. O. Procksch, Genesis p. 108.

156. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 181.

157. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 18; H. Seebass, 'Zu Genesis 15', WuD, NF vii (1963) p. 148, also refers to Ex. 33, 12f., according to which Moses also is reported to have asked for further proof of Yahweh's grace; cf. also N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, pp. 38-39.

158. MT has a collective singular. Samaritan Pentateuch has the plural בניהם.

159. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, p. 63; also cf. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 109.

160. ותשכח is probably a gloss, cf. BHK,[3] ad loc.

161. Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., 113 bb, infinite absolute used as an emphatic imperative.

162. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, pp. 95-96; A.L. Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, pp. 200ff.,

cites the saga dream of Asshurbanipal which has features similar to Abraham's dream experience.

163. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 183.

164. H.W. Robinson, 'Theology of the Old Testament', Record and Revelation, pp. 33; cf. also G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 397.

165. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, p. 120, translates, 'Yahweh took an oath of curse regarding following promises', in accordance with his hypothesis.

166. Omit וְאֵת הַגָּר as an explanatory gloss, cf. BHK^3, ad loc.

167. O. Kaiser, 'Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Gen. 15', ZAW lxx (1958) p. 121. For the form of the fire-pot cf. M. Noth, The Old Testament World, p. 160.

168. G von Rad, Genesis, p. 183.

169. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, pp. 101-113. However, cf. N. Lohfink, Das Hauptgebot, p. 123, where he thinks that the reference to a double oath is a later addition.

170. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 183; also cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 183f.

171. L.A. Snijders, op. cit., p. 262.

172. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 21.

173. O. Kaiser, op. cit., pp. 123f., suggests with Kraetzschmar, transferring 15, 8-21 to follow 12, 7a and concludes the event with 12, 7b, where Abraham is said to have built an altar to the God who appeared to him. See above p. 125. This would give a better conclusion but the present text appears deliberately to have left it out.

184. J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 27.

175. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 289.

176. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 267.

177. O. Procksch, Genesis, pp. 515f.

178. C. Steuernagel, 'Bemerkungen zu Genesis 17', BZAW xxxiv (1920) p. 177.

179. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 192.

180. G. von Rad, Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, BWANT, 4. Folge, xiii (1934) pp. 20-25.

181. M. Noth, U Pent., p. 261, n. 632 and p. 255.

182. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 25f.

183. See above p. 141.

184. תמים is a word used for a sacrificial animal without blemish. W. Eichrodt, Theology, vol. i, p. 418, points out the moral implications of the term in the patriarchal stories of P.

185. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 108 d; See above n. 21.

186. Ibid, § 108c. The cohortative is used to express a wish or request for permission that one should be allowed to do something. נתן (cf. Neh. 9, 10; BDB, Lexicon, p. 681) can be used in the sense of 'to perform'. NEB has 'set'.

187. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 192.

188. Ibid, pp. 192f.; cf. McEvenue, op. cit., p. 152, who notes that P eliminates the dialogic aspect in Gen. 17, which is so prominent in Gen. 15.

189. See below p. 150.

190. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 191.

191. El Shaddai is only mentioned by P in the patriarchal narratives : Gen. 17, 1; 28, 3; 35, 11; 48, 3; Ex. 6, 3 and Gen. 43, 14 of which BDB, op. cit., p. 995, assigns the last passage to R^P.

192. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 267.

193. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers', History and Religion, pp. 9 and 22.

194. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) p. 36, n. 1.

195. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 28.

196. L. Rost, 'Gottesverehrung' SVT vii (1960) pp. 356-357. See above p.51.

197. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 193.

198. S.R. Driver, The Book of Genesis, pp. 404ff.

199. W.F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 244.

200. M. Weippert, 'Erwägungen zur Etymologie des Gottesnamens "El Saddaj",' ZDMG cxi (1961) pp. 50-54.

201. A.B. Davidson, Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. ii, p. 199. The Peshitta translated שדי 12 times in Job as ܚܝܠܐ , 'the strong one'. Cf. S.R. Driver, Genesis, p. 405.

202. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 143 a. A personal pronoun is somewhat frequently used as the principal subject.

203. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 286.

204. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 95.

205. G. von Rad, Die Priesterschrift, p. 26.

206. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 26.

207. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 288, quotes Heit Müller, who emphasizes that with the change of name, a person's nature and destiny are changed.

208. The priesthood and monarchy were in close alliance with each other. W. Eichrodt, Theology, vol. i, pp. 392-452, groups these together as 'official leaders', in opposition to the prophetic groups whom he describes as 'charismatic leaders'.

209. Cf. BDB, op. cit., p. 879.

210. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 71.

211. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 195 (cf. other passages, Gen. 21,23; 28,4; 35,27; 37,1).

212. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 11f.

213. G. von Rad, Die Priesterscrift, p. 25.

214. Note the different verbs employed, reflecting the different stages of the conversation in chapter 17 , 2a וְאֶתְּנָה cohortative; 7a, וַהֲקִמֹתִי Hiph'il perfect with ו consecutive.

215. W. Zimmerli, 'Sinaibund und Abrahambund' ThZ xvi (1960) pp. 268-280.

216. J. Hempel, Geschichten und Geschichte im Alten Testament, p. 200.

217. J.G. Vink, 'The date and origin of the Priestly code in the Old Testament', OTS xv (1969) pp. 89-91.

218. G. von Rad, Theology, vol. ii, pp. 270-271, points out that ideas about a new covenant and the transformation of man were current in Israel in the Babylonian and early Persian periods the time in which the Priestly document is dated. It is possible that P incoporated this idea into his account (cf. also pp. 212-215 and 235).

219. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 142 f, n. 2 - priority of the subject for emphasis. NEB translates 'for your part', which is very appropriate after God had delineated his part of the covenant in

the preceding section. See above n. 199.

220. MT את בריתי את ; A. Dillmann, Genesis, pp. 84f., suggests reading את אות בריתי את .

221. Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 144b. Third person singular masculine refers to an act just mentioned.

222. B.O. Long, The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament, p. 68, points out that the idiom היה ל is fundamentally equivalent to English 'become', and that it narrows in the case of היה לאות and a few other expression to the nuance 'serve as'.

223. MT has לברית עולם . Circumcision is a sign of the covenant as in v. 11. See above n. 217.

224. פרר usually means 'to break, to frustrate', but it has also the meaning 'to invalidate' cf. Koehler-Baumgartner, op. cit., p. 781. Here it does not refer to breaking the covenant, but perhaps means 'to discredit' the covenant relationship.

225. R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 34, thinks that the Yahwist dropped the obligation to loyalty in order to heighten the emphasis upon the divine promise; N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, pp. 101-113, on the other hand, thinks that the patriarchal land-promise oath was given without any obligations.

226. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 195.

227. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 340.

228. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 269.

229. B.O. Long, op. cit., p. 72.

230. G. von Rad, Die Priesterschrift, pp. 23f.

231. Cf. Phil. 3,5.

232. See above n. 219.

233. S.E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, pp. 158-159, gives in detail the close parallels between these two sections as follows :

A. Yahweh's intention to make an oath about progeny (vv. 1-2).
B. Abraham falls on his face (v. 3a)
C. Abraham father of nations (v. 4b-6)
D. God will carry out his oath for ever (v.7)
E. The sign of the oath (vv. 9-14)

A^1. God's intention to bless Sarah with progeny (v. 16)
B^1. Abraham falls on his face etc., (vv. 17-18)
C^1. Sarah, mother of a son - Issac (v. 19)
D^1. God will carry out his oath for ever (vv. 18b. 21)
E^1. The sign of the oath (vv. 23-27)

234. H. Mowvley, 'The concept and content of "blessing" in the Old Testament', BT xvi (1965) p. 78.

235. G. von Rad, Die Priesterschrift, p. 24.

236. S.E. McEvenue, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

237. J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 28.

238. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 202.

239. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 204.

240. M. Noth, U Pent, p. 259, n. 627.

241. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung,' Forschung, pp. 71-72.

242. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 199f.,

243. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', History and Religion, pp. 59f.

244. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 200.

245. G. Widengren, 'Early Hebrew myths and their interpretations', Myth, Ritual and Kingship, pp. 184 and 186.

246. Gesenius-Kautzsch, § 118 u, כְּ is used as a simple particle of time, Gen. 18,10, כָּעֵת חַיָּה 'at this time' (not 'about this time') when it arrives again, i.e. at the end of a year. NEB translates 'about this time next year', RSV takes it to mean 'spring'. But J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 301, suggests that it should be translated 'according to the time of a pregnant woman', '9 months hence'. So does BHK^3 ad loc. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 197, thinks that it reflects an ancient mythological idea that the 'time' dies and over the year lives again.

247. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads וַיֵּרָא and the LXX οὖσα ὄπισθεν αὐτοῦ. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 301, suggests that MT is perhaps a neglect of q^{e}rē perpetuum. However, MT is preferable. NEB translates 'and he was close beside it.'

248. Literally 'the period according to women had ceased for Sarah'.

249. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 133 c, מִן after adjectives or intransitive verbs possessing an attributive sense express that the quality is too little or too much in force for the attainment of a particular aim or object. מִמֶּנִּי נִפְלָא 'to be too wonderful for one' (and consequently inconceivable or unattainable).

250. Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 106b and 163a.

251. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 321 observes that the root שׂחק does not occur outside the Pentateuch except in Jud. 16, 25 (where, however, מְשַׂחֵק should probably be read).

252. Von Rad, Die Priesterschrift, p. 24 and S.E. McEvenue, op. cit., p. 153 suggest that P has probably taken his material from Gen. 18.

253. H.L. Ginsberg, 'Ba'lu and his brethren' JPOS xvi (1936) p. 140f, n.3.

254. G. Widengren, op. cit., pp. 185-188.

255. F.F. Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament, p. 55.

256. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 226; cf. D.N. Freedman, 'The original name of Jacob', IEJ xiii (1963) pp. 125-126, who finds traces of an originally fuller form of 'Jacob' compounded with אֵל in Deut. 33, 28.

257. The LXX and the Peshitta read עבדי after מאברהם cf. BHK^3 ad loc.

258. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 204.

259. Amos 3,7 is thought by some to be a late addition to the text of Amos. See especially J.L. Mays, Amos, pp. 61-62.

260. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung,' Forschung, pp. 72f.

261. G.J. Botterweck, 'Gott Erkennen' im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testmentes, pp. 18. and 35. G. Quell, 'Election in the Old Testament, TDNT, vol. IV, p. 148, says that ידע in Gen. 18, 19 is used as an 'alternative for providential care'.

262. R. Bultmann, γινώσκω, TDNT, vol. i, p. 168.

263. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 201, 'Denn ich habe ihn erkoren'.

264. E. Baumann, ' ידע und seine Derivate', ZAW xxviii (1908) p. 32.

265. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 12f.

266. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation, xx (1966) pp. 147f.

267. H-P. Muller, Ursprünge und Strukturen, BZAW cix, p. 54.

268. H.W. Wolff, 'The kerygma of the Yahwist', Interpretation, xx (1966) p. 147.

269. J. Wellhausen, Composition, pp. 24 and 29.

270. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 226f.; cf. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 320, who follows Gunkel.

271. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 226.

272. M. Noth, U Pent., p. 17, n. 47 and p. 42, n. 146.

273. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 226.

274. וַתִּצְחַק (v. 2), ־ַ designating a condition or state, cf. BDB, op. cit., p. 516, 5. k.

275. G. Widengren, op. cit., pp. 184-185; cf. M. Jastrow, A Dictionary, p. 1206b.

276. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 226.

277. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 227.

278. K. Elliger, 'Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung', ZThK xlix (1953) pp. 123; cf. S.E. McEvenue, op. cit., p. 142, who points out that although there is no explicit reference to fulfilment, 21, 1b and 2b refer back and imply a fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham and Sarah in chapter 17.

279. J. Wellhausen, Composition, pp. 18 and 25; similarly O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 319 suggests that these verses are derived from the redactor who combined the J and E materials together.

280. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 239.

281. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 331.

282. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 237.

283. M. Noth, U Pent, p. 121, n. 317.

284. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 28, n. 104.

285. Inserting כאשר with the Samaritan Pentateuch, the LXX, the Peshitta and the Vulgate. Cf. also v. 12, where כאשר follows ולא תשכח את בנך את יחידך See BHK[3] ad loc.; כי takes up the נשבעתי of v. 16 after giving the reason for this oath of Yahweh.

286. MT שער 'gate', NEB translates as 'cities'.

287. The idea of blessing 12,2; many descendants 12,2; 16,10; like the stars in the heaven 15,5; like the sand, which is 'dust' in 13,16; all nations of the earth will wish themselves blessing (Hithpa'el, but Niph'al in 12,3 and 18,18).

288. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 238, rightly points out that 24,60 is not a divine promise. It is the blessing of the family on the sister departing to her husband's home.

289. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, pp. 36-39 and 61-66, emphasizes the family as the sphere of the patriarchal narratives. Cf. also 'Segen und Fluch', EKL vol. iii, col. 918.

290. T. Plassmann, op. cit., p. 156; S. Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, vol. v, p. 6; H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 165; E.A. Speiser, Genesis, p. 86; J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 8f; J. Scharbert, 'Fluchen und segen im Alten Testament', Biblica xxxix (1958) p. 25; Solidarität in Segen und Fluch im Alten Testament und in seiner Umwelt, p. 142; A. Murtonen, op. cit., p. 171f.

291. See above pp. 110-111.

292. For Gen. 22, 15-18, see above p. 165. Cf. also R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, pp. 270-272. For 26, 3b-5, see below p.176. See especially the comparison of both passages in O. Procksch, Genesis, pp. 157 and 319. Procksch considers the Hithpa'el to be the work of the redactor who weakens J's idea of blessing. Moreover, משפחות האדמה is made into כל גוי הארץ.

293. G. Wehmeier, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

294. See above Eissfeldt's views on the special characteristics of the documentary sources, pp. 59-61.

295. H.W. Wolff, 'Zur Thematik der elohistischen Fragmente im Petateuch', Ev.Th xxix (1969) pp. 63-65.

296. G. von Rad, Theology, vol. i, p. 174; 'History and the patriarchs', ET lxxii (1960/61) pp. 213f.

297. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 72.

298. Ibid, pp. 70-71.

299. M. Noth, U Pent., p. 121.

300. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 245.

301. J.G. Vink, op. cit., p. 91.

302. S.E. McEvenue, op. cit., p. 142, n. 77[a]

303. S. Mowinckel, Erwägungen zur Pentateuchquellenfrage, p. 30.

304. J. Wellhausen, Composition, pp. 29f; H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 249f.

305. O. Procksch, op. cit., pp. 148-155.

306. M. Noth, U Pent, pp. 114.

307. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 245f.

308. For a discussion of the theme of hidden divine guidance, see above p. 46.

309. J. Pedersen, op. cit., p. 196.

310. Cf. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, p. 21; H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 252, asks whether v. 7 could be an addition; O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 143; M. Noth, U Pent., p. 30. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 29. R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, p. 205.

311. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung, pp. 21-33. See above pp. 138-139 for Lohfink's hypothesis in connexion with Gen. 15. Lohfink considers both 22,16 and 24,7 to be valid proofs in support of interpreting 15, 18 כרת ברית as an oath of Yahweh.

312. 'Mother of', lit. 'May you be thousands of ten thousands'.

313. MT שער 'gate'. NEB translates as 'cities'.

314. MT has שנאיו 'those that hate him'. One may note the reading אביו implied by the Targum, two manuscripts and the Samaritan Pentateuch, cf. BHS ad loc.

315. A. Weiser, 'Isaak', RGG^3, iii, col. 903.

316. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 112ff.

317. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, pp. 67f.

318. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 299, similarly, J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 30 says that Gen. 26, 1-11 is only understandable before 25,19-34.

319. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 265.

320. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 15f.

321. H. Seebass, Der Erzväter Israel, p. 40, n. 145.

322. See above p. 173.

323. O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 157 notes this but does not discuss its implications.

324. A.M. Silbermann, ed., Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary, p. 117. Rashi comments that Isaac had thought of going down to Egypt as his father had gone down in time of famine, but this is not mentioned in the text; H. Holzinger, Genesis, p. 176 comments that the reference to the former famine in v. 1 may have suggested the idea of going down to Egypt.

325. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 265.

326. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 41, n. 149 and p. 103, n. 77.

327. A. weiser, 'Isaak' RGG^3, iii, cols. 92f.

328. A. Jepsen, op. cit., pp. 265f.

329. Traces of Isaac's association with the northern tribes can still be perceived in the 8th century B.C., in Amos 7,9. 16, where the northern kingdom is referred to as the 'high places of Isaac' and 'the house of Isaac'. Cf. also Amos 5,5 where Beersheba is mentioned as a place of pilgrimage for the inhabitants of the northern kingdom.

330. H.D. Preuss, ' ... ich will mit dir sein', ZAW lxxx (1968) pp. 139-173.

331. J. Pedersen, op. cit., p. 194.

332. For the origin of blessing in Canaanite religion and culture, see above p. 110 cf. also pp. 222f.

333. See below p. 224.

334. See above pp. 167 and 168 for the discussion on the difference between the Niph'al and the Hithpa'el.

335. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 300.

336. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 364.

337. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 266.

338. J. Pedersen, op. cit., p. 190.

339. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 300.

340. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 366.

341. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 31, finds that four promises are added together in 28, 13-15, of which only the promise of land belongs to the narrative.

342. H.M. Dion, op. cit., pp. 201-206.

343. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, pp. 66f.

344. See above p. 128.

345. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung,' Forschung, pp. 75-76 and n. 45.

346. See above pp. 25-26.

347. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 231, says that the repeated attempts of the Edomites to throw off the yoke of Israel cannot be before the Davidic period.

348. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 305f.

349. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 271.

350. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 77.

351. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 119 w, n. 2. 'All the partitive uses of מן also come most naturally under the idea of separation out of a larger class'.

352. The K^{e}thīb is וישתחו , but the Samaritan Pentateuch and Q^{e}rē have וישתחוו cf. BHK^{3} ad loc.

353. The reading of L is וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי . Most manuscripts and editions, however, read וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי.

354. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 119 v.

355. מִמַּעַל 'above' and not 'from above', cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 119 c.

356. For עַל meaning 'to rely upon' cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 119 aa.

357. וְתָרֵד from רוד Hiph'il 'to show restlessness'. The Samaritan Pentateuch has וְתַאֲרִיךְ 'be great', cf. BHK[3] ad loc.

358. S. Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, p. 40 observes that the words of the blessing of Esau are similar to those of Jacob but that they are given a negative sense. He says that the author skilfully reverses the order of words and thereby perhaps suggests a reversal of the blessings as well.

359. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 77, comments that Esau's blessing is only a broken blessing, which directly recalls the curse of Cain.

360. W. Eichrodt, Theology, vol, i, pp. 173f.

361. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 308.

362. G. von Rad, Theology, vol. ii, pp. 81f.; Th.C. Vriezen, Theology p. 94.

363. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 169, observes that originally Isaac had intended no blessing for Jacob at all.

364. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 316, says that Jacob and Esau represent the types of the clever herdsman and the rough war-like hunter.

365. The blessing pronounced over Jacob speaks of many brothers, but the saga represents only one (27, 29. 37). The subjection of

Edom was in the time of David (II Sam. 8, 13-14) and their freedom in the time of Solomon (I Kings 11, 14-25), or later in the period of King Joram (II Kings 8, 20ff.).

366. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 103ff.

367. V. Maag, 'Jakob - Esau - Edom', ThZ xiii (1957) pp. 421-429.

368. See above pp. 111f.

369. A. Murtonen, op. cit., p. 177.

370. Cf. J. Pedersen, op. cit., p. 199.

371. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 385-386; G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 276-277; Die Priesterschrift, pp. 28-29; J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 6, n. 3, attributes it to his El-Shaddai group which is almost identical with the Priestly document, so much so that in the course of his book he is obliged to use the common designation P.

372. See above p. 174f.

373. See above n. 7 for the imperative preceding promise in the patriarchal narratives.

374. W. Gross, op. cit., pp. 326ff.

375. A. Cody, 'When is the chosen people called gôy?', VT xiv (1964) p.5.

376. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 276-277.

377. J.G. Vink, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

378. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 317; O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 388; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 279; O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, p. 199; J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, pp. 16f., attributes it to his Gen. xv group, which almost equivalen to JE.

379. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. xxv.

380. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählungen', Forschung, pp. 41f and 83f.

381. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 280.

382. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', History and Religion, pp. 22f. See above p. 9 and cf. M. Weippert, Settlement, pp. 104f.

383. O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, p. 43.

384. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Erzvätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitz-Verheissungen', WZ Halle xvii (1968) p. 49.

385. 'Fear not' is not in MT, but is added in the LXX μὴ φοβοῦ For the connexion of the oracle of salvation with promise, see above p. 127-128.

386. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 317.

387. A.L. Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, pp. 187b and 190b.

388. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 318.

389. W. Zimmerli, Gottes Offenbarung. Gesammelte Aufsätze, pp. 16-21.

390. R. Rendtorff, Offenbarung als Geschichte, pp. 33f.

391. See above p. 64.

392. Cf. BHK^3 ad loc.

393. See above pp. 127-128.

394. J. Dus, 'Der Jakobsbund Gen. 15, 18ff.', ZAW lxxx (1968) pp. 35-38. Dus is in agreement with Noth that the Jacob traditions were the earliest among the patriarchal narratives. See above p. 15.

395. J. Wellhausen, Composition, p. 31; H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 319. Cf. BHK^3 ad loc., and BHS ad loc.

396. See above pp. 109-110 for the use of the Niph'al by J.

397. נדרתי , NEB 'I promised'.

398. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 322; H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 22f., n. 52, gives other examples where the Yahwist changes the words of men into Yahweh's words.

399. W. Richter, 'Das Gelübde als theologische Rahmung der Jakobsüberlieferung', BZ NF. xi (1967) pp. 45. 50-51.

400. H. Eising, Formgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Jakobserzählung der Genesis, pp. 258 and 272, considers the narrative to be a secondary formation by a reviser; H.H. Guthrie, 'Tithe', IDB vol. iv, p. 654b, on the other hand, points out that the reference to oaths in vv. 28 and 14 does not reflect the age in which the patriarchal legends are set. It may be observed here that although tithes are connected with the Canaanite cult places Bethel and Jerusalem (R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 34, n. 46), they are associated with protection, preservation and guidance on the way and in battle, and these are the chief characteristics of nomadic religion and not those of Canaanite religion. Here there seems to be a conscious orientation of Canaanite cultic rites to the nomadic idea of guidance and protection. Thus it could be a deliberate act on the part of the Elohist who has a negative attitude towards Canaan, its religion and culture.

401. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 341.

402. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 395, points out that this is the only occurence of מולדת in E.

403. MT את בית אל .

404. CF. BHK^3, ad loc., BHS, ad loc.

405. A. Alt, 'The God of the fathers', History and Religion, p. 51, n. 138.

406. E.A. Speiser, Genesis, p. 244.

407. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 127 f.

408. R. Kittel, 'Der Gott der Bet'el', JBL xliv (1925) pp. 141ff.

409. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 343.

410. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der Gott Bethel', KS i, pp. 212-214.

411. Cf. W. Richter, 'Das Gelübde als theologische Rahmung der Jakob-sümerlieferungen', BZ NF. xi (1967) pp. 42-52.

412. NEB 'which is beyond all counting' is better than RSV, which seems to follow Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., 107 w, 'Which cannot be numbered for multitude.'

413. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 313.

414. H. Gunkel, 'Jacob', What remains of the Old Testament?, pp. 166f.

415. V. Trigt, 'La signification de la lutte de Jacob près du Yabboq Gen. xxxii, 23-33', OTS xii (1958) p. 283. Cf. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 364, who gives parallel sagas amongst other peoples dealing with nocturnal struggles with demons, monsters, phantoms or the devil.

416. Ibid, p. 359.

417. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 315.

418. O. Procksch, Genesis, p. 372.

419. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 104 and 110f.

420. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 20.

421. N. Schmidt, 'The Numen at Penuel', JBL xlv (1926) pp. 260-279.

422. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 23, thinks that this weeping represents a blessing request in the form of a special rite.

423. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 361.

424. P.R. Ackroyd, 'Hosea and Jacob', VT xiii (1963) p. 251.

425. H. Gunkel, 'Jacob', What remains of the Old Testament? p. 165.

426. H. Eising, op. cit., pp. 124f.

427. K. Elliger, 'Der Jakobskampf am Jabbok', ZThK xlviii (1951) pp. 24ff.

428. H. Seebass, op. cit., pp. 17f.

429. V. Trigt, op. cit., p. 287.

430. See above p. 33 and Section I n. 103.

431. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 20.

432. שרה occurs only here and in the parallel passage in Hos. 12, 4f.

433. See above p. 203.

434. W. Gross, op. cit., p. 330.

435. V. Trigt, op. cit., p. 295 says that this was communicated to him in a letter. However, Trigt himself does not seem to approve of it.

436. E. Täubler, 'The first mention of Israel', PAAJR, xii (1942) pp. 115-120.

437. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 34; E. Vogt, 'Nomen Israel in Tabulis Ugariticis', Biblica xxxviii (1957) p. 375. See aslo Ch. Virolleaud,'Les Nouvelles Tablettes Alphabétiques de Ras Shamra (XIX^{e} Campagne, 1955)', Comptes Rendus de L'academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, pp. 64f; C.F.-A. Schaeffer, Missions de Ras Shamra, Tome xi, Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit, vol. v, (69-18.49), p. 97. cf. n.3.

List of mrynm
mry [n](m)
bn rmy [y]
ysril [
anntn bn [

cf. also C. Gordon, Ugaritic Text Book, Supplement, Text 2069, l.3, p. 20.

438. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 362; cf. also p. 268.

439. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der Kanaanäische El als Geber...', WZ Halle xvii (1968) p. 50.

440. E. Nielsen, Shechem, p. 231, says that the name of the altar almost seems like a confession.

441. O. Eissfeldt, 'Renaming in the Old Testament', Words and meanings, pp. 76-77.

442. G.A. Danell, The Name Israel in the Old Testament, p. 37.

443. See above p. 29.

444. V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels', Sch.Th.U., pp. 8f.; similarly K.T. Andersen, 'Der Gott meines Vaters', St.Th. xvi (1962) p. 181.

445. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der kanaanäische El als Geber', WZ Halle xvii (1968) p. 46.

446. V. Trigt, op. cit., p. 289.

447. P.A.H. de Boer, 'Gen. xxxii, 23-33. Some remarks on the composition and character of the story', NTT, 1946-47, p. 162.

448. A. Bentzen, 'The weeping of Jacob, Hos. xii, 5A', VT i (1951) p. 58.

449. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 317.

450. A.M. Honeyman, 'Merismus in Biblical Hebrew', JBL lxxi (1952) p. 16.

451. V. Trigt, op. cit., p. 289; J. Skinner, op. cit., pp. 409-410.

452. Gesenius-Kautzsch, op. cit., § 106 n. 'The perfect is used to express facts which are undoubtedly imminent and therefore in the imagination of the speaker already accomplished.'

453. S.R. Driver, The Use of the Tenses in Hebrew, 74.

454. O. Procksch, op. cit., p. 373 and R. de Vaux, La Genèse, p. 151,

propose dropping the ו and reading יוכל to give a future meaning. The LXX and perhaps the Vulgate also give a future sense. Cf. J. Schildenberger, 'Jakobs nachtlicher Kampf mit dem Elohim am Jabok (Gen. 32, 23-33)', Miscellanea Biblica, p. 73.

455. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, p. 81.

456. J. Hoftijzer, Die Verheissungen, p. 24, attributes this to the El Shaddai group, which is almost equivalent to P.

457. H. Seebass, op. cit., p. 20.

458. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 333.

459. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 387.

460. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 425.

461. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 387.

462. G. von Rad, Die Priesterschrift, pp. 25f.

463. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 334.

464. J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 426.

465. A.F. Key, 'The giving of proper names in the Old Testament', JBL lxxxiii (1964) p. 57.

466. See above p. 205 and n. 444.

467. For the use of קהל גוים in 35,11, see above p. 190.

468. See above p. 191.

469. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 387.

470. H. Holzinger, Genesis, p. 185.

471. J.G. Vink, op. cit., p. 93.

472. See below pp. 228-229.

473. V. Maag, 'Malkut Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) p. 137; J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 96-97.

474. See above p. 60.

475. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung', Forschung, pp. 66-69.

476. J. Scharbert, Solidarität in Segen und Fluch, p. 148 describes these as 'clan father blessings'; cf. F. Horst, op. cit., p. 25.

477. J. Scharbert, Solidarität, pp. 141-142; cf. F. Horst, op. cit., p. 25.

478. See above p. 192.

479. See above p. 170.

480. The only instance of war, in chapter 14, is defensive and has the aim of releasing Lot and his family. It was not waged to acquire territory but only to drive away the invaders. Abraham is said to have refused even the booty. Moreover, this story is of doubtful source and so cannot be precisely dated.

481. See above p. 187.

482. E.A. Speiser, Genesis, p. 212; 'I know not the day of my death', JBL lxxiv (1955) pp. 252-256.

483. Cf. J. Scharbert, Solidarität, pp. 149-150.

484. J.B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 146; A. Van Selms, Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature, pp. 40f., points out similarities between the Ugaritic and the patriarchal marraige blessings. Cf. C. Gordon, Ugaritic Text Book, p. 195 (Text 128 : I, 17-28); G.R.Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, pp.36-37.

485. C.Westermann, ' Arten der Erzählung ', Forschung, pp.66f.

S E C T I O N - III NOTES

1. For discussion on Alt, see above pp. 5 - 12.

2. See above p. 11, Section.- I, n. 40.

3. M. Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 69, 122f.

4. G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 184.

5. W.F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 243; J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 87; G.E. Wright, 'Modern Issues in Biblical Studies : History and the Patriarchs', ET lxxi (1959-1960) pp. 295f

6. M. Noth, 'Die Ursprünge des alten Israel im Lichte neuer Quellen,' Aufsätze zur bibichen Landes - und Altertumskunde pp. 263-265; The History of Israel, p. 124; 'Der Beitrag der Archaologie zur Geschichte Israels', SVT vii (1960) p. 266; cf. also R. de Vaux, Die Patriarchenerzählungen und die Geschichte, pp. 19f.

7. R. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 22 considers the patriarchs to be sheep or cattle-breeding nomads. He also argues for the possibility of the patriarchs being camel-nomads; W.F. Albright, 'Abraham the Hebrew, a new archaeological interpretation', BASOR clxiii (1961) pp. 36-54. E.A. Speiser, 'The verb SHR in Genesis and in early Hebrew movements', BASOR clxiv (1961) pp. 23-28 argues that the patriarchs were itinerant merchants. W.F. Albright, Archaeology, Historical Analogy and Early Biblical Tradition, p. 30, considers the patriarchs to be donkey-caravaneers.

8. M. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 69.

9. M. Haran, 'The religion of the patriarchs, an attempt at synthesis', ASTI iv (1965) p. 34.

10. See above p. 11.

11. W. Eichrodt, Review of H.E. Fosdick's 'A Guide to the Understanding of the Bible', JBL lxv (1946) p. 206; He expresses a similar view in his Theology of the Old Testament, vol. i, pp. 453f. G. von Rad, 'Promised land and Yahweh's land', The Problem, pp. 88-89, does not give much credit to Canaanite religious influence but says that it could be 'found in the emphatic portrayals of Yahweh's blessings on the land'.

12. H. Gunkel, Genesis, p. lxi.

13. R. Brinker, The Influence of Sanctuaries on the Legislation and History of Israel, pp. 395-396.

14. S. Moscati, Ancient Semitic Civilizations, pp. 112-113; cf. also Ibid, The Face of the Ancient Orient, pp. 209-211.

15. I. Engnell, 'Old Testament Religion', Critical Essays on the Old Testament, pp. 35-49. W.F. Albright, 'The role of the Canaanites in the history of civilization', The Bible and the Ancient Near East, pp. 328-362, also emphasizes Canaanite influence upon Israel, but he limits it only to the cultural and literary fields and does not find any influence upon Israelite religion, because Canaanite religion, he says, was at an extremely low level, with primitive mythology and demoralizing cultic practices. But it would be strange if Israel was influenced only in the cultural and literary spheres and not in the religious one, in view of the fact that religion was of great importance amongst the ancient peoples. See above pp. 69f for Alt's comment on such a limited appreciation of Canaanite influence upon Israel.

16. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der Kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Erzvätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitz-Verheissungen', WZ Halle xvii (1968) pp. 45-53.

17. O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament : An Introduction, pp. 198. 200.

18. G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 33; 'Die wiederentdeckte Kanaanäische Religion', Studien zur alttestamentlicher Theologie und Geschichte 1949-1966, BZAW cxv (1969) pp. 3-12; and 'Universal ideas in ancient Canaanite and Biblical-Israelite Religions', Parliament of Religions, p. 63.

19. E. Hammershaimb, 'On the ethics of the Old Testament prophets', SVT vii (1959) p. 89.

20. H.H. Schmid, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, pp. 10-12.

21. V. Maag, 'Malkut Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) pp. 134-137. 140-141.

22. Similarly M. Buber, The Kingdom of God, p. 100, emphasizes the 'on the move and leader' characteristics of the Israelite nomadic god; cf. also The Prophetic Faith, p. 34.

23. L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, pp. 71-72.

24. J. Hempel, 'Altes Testament und Religionsgeschichte', ThLZ lxxxi (1956) col. 269.

25. C. Westermann, 'Das Verhältnis des Jahweglaubens zu den ausserisraelitischen Religionen', Forschung am Alten Testament, pp. 204-212.

26. W. Schottroff, Der israelitische Fluchspruch, p. 197.

27. The five-fold use of the root ברך has been observed first by W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment', Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 92. K. Galling, Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels, includes blessing passages (Gen. 9, 25. 27-L; 27, 29a.c-L; 27,27. 29b-E) in his chapter, 'Die Erzväterverheissungen', but does not discuss the implications of 'blessing' separately, pp. 37-49. Alt follows Galling in including blessing in the concept of promise, cf. 'The God of the fathers', p. 64, n. 173. Speaking about 'promise' connected with the 'gods of the fathers' and not with the Canaanite Elim, Alt says 'they (promises) begin as early as the blessing of Shem ..... although the form in which

God appears is not yet found'. C. Westermann, Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche, pp. 23-28 has an excellent survey of literature on the importance given to the theme of 'blessing' in the Old Testament. See above Section - I, n. 279, pp. 278-279.

28. The positive attitude of the Yahwist towards Canaan and its culture is emphasized by O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, pp. 199-200; also cf. 'Sinaierzählung und Bileam-Sprüche', HUCA xxxii (1961) pp. 188-190; and 'Die Komposition der Bileam-Erzählung', ZAW lvii (1939) pp. 236-238. See also G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 149-150.

29. In Ugarit, El is called bny bnwt' creator of created things'. The verb בנה is used in J's story of the creation of woman (Gen. 2, 22 ויבן). Doubts have been cast on the meaning 'to create' for קנה in Gen. 14,19. 22 (cf. Ahlström, op. cit., p. 74), but M.H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts, points out that Ugarit attests the meaning 'to create' for qny; cf. J. Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, p. 118. See also E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 144, n. 3. J. ~~Baar~~ Barr, 'The problem of Israelite monotheism', TGUOS xvii (1959) p. 59 supports the translation 'to create'.

30. See above pp. 221f.

31. G. Ahlström, Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion, p. 11, n.1.

32. Ibid, p. 11. Ahlström thinks that there would have been a complete association of nomadic religion with Canaanite religion and that this adaptation was not originally looked upon as apostasy. See also p. 88. Cf. also R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 294 who says that the new immigrants took part in the Canaanite cult and that no one took any offence at it.

33. H. Gressmann, 'Sage und Geschichte in den Patriarchenerzählungen', ZAW xxx (1910) pp. 1-34. See especially p. 28.

34. W.W.G. Baudissin, Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte, pp. 130-137.

35. W.H. Schmidt, Alttestamentlicher Glaube und seine Umwelt, p. 27 Cf. also L. Rost, 'Die Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen', SVT vii (1960) p. 355.

36. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, pp. 49-50. Cf. R.E. Clements, God and Temple, p. 16, who points out that with the transition from nomadic life to a settled way of life, there also arose a temptation to adopt the religion of the Canaanite neighbours, with its promise of blessing in the land, but that the Hebrew clans had resisted this temptation.

37. W.H. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 24.

38. See above p. 42.

39. See above p. 35.

40. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, pp. 36-39. 61-66.

41.S See above p. 26.

42. C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, pp. 25-26.

43. See above pp. 214-216.

44. Cf. I. Blythin, 'The Patriarchs and the Promise', SJT xxi (1968) p. 71. Cf. also P.S. Minear, 'Promise', IDB vol. iii, p. 893.

45. Translating 'Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem' (RSV). K. Budde, Die biblische Urgeschichte, p. 294f., proposed to omit אלהי and to read בְּרוּךְ יהוה שֵׁם 'Blessed of Yahweh be Shem' (cf. 24,31; 26,29 both J). J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 184, prefers to read בָּרֵךְ יהוה אָהֳלֵי שֵׁם 'Bless O Yahweh the tens of Shem', and this is also proposed by BHK^3. Similarly, NEB renders by 'Bless O Lord the tents of Shem'. H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 81f., observes that it is not Shem but his God who is blessed and comments that the ancestor blesses the God from whom all good comes upon Shem.

ברוך יהוה is a phrase used frequently at the beginning of doxologies.

46. Gen. 11, 10-26 traces Abraham's genealogy back to Shem.

47. V. Maag, 'Der Hirte Israels' SchThU xxviii (1958) p. 3 identifies three different roots from which the religion of Israel had developed : (1) the nomadic religion of the gods of the fathers; (2) Yahwism localized at the Holy mountain, and (3) the nature religion of the Canaanite peasant culture. Cf. also S.H. Hooke, 'Myth and Ritual : past and present', Myth, Ritual and Kingship, who has a similar concept of Israelite religion.

48. H. Seebass, Der Erzväter Israel, pp. 76-80, gives the common features between the religion of the 'gods of the fathers' and Yahwism. See above p. 32 for an evaluation of these features.

49. Although Yahweh is described as God guiding and leading his people through the desert into the promised land, his cult is localized at mount Sinai, a feature which is similar to that of the locality-bound Canaanite Elim. Cf. M. Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine, p. 105, who points out that Yahweh was connected to a place.

50. See above pp. 139.

51. S.H. Hooke, In the Beginning, pp. 135-136.

52. Cf. W. Zimmerli, 'Abraham und Melchizedek', Das ferne und nahe Wort, p. 261.

53. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, pp. 201-203.

54. S.G.F. Brandon, History, Time and Deity, p. 114, draws attention to the fact that the theme of 'Promise' is not mentioned in the creed at all.

55. Deut. 26, 7-8. C. Westermann, 'Das Verhältnis des Jahwehglaubens zu den ausserisraelitischen Religionen', Forschung, p. 213, points

out that the theme 'cry of the people and response of Yahweh' is prominent in the Exodus tradition. Cf. also H-P. Müller, 'Imperativ und Verheissung im Alten Testament. Drei Beispiele', Ev.Th. xxviii (1968) p. 560, n. 10, who says that in contrast to 12, 1-3 which begins with a salvation oracle, Deut. 26,5 has salvation given as response to the cry of the fathers in Egypt.

56. See above p. 227.

57. M. Noth, U Pent., pp. 40-48.

58. See above pp. 18.

59. See above p. 20.

60. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, p. 167.

61. G.W. Ahlström, op. cit., pp. 18-24.

62. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

63. The Nazarites are mentioned in close association with the נביאים in Amos 2, 11-12.

64. M. Noth, 'God, King and Nation', The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, p. 161. Further, on p. 166, Noth comments that the connexion of the establishment of the monarchy with an agricultural ideology cannot be ruled out.

65. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, vol. i, p. 44, points out that the word used for the new king was נגיד (I Sam. 9, 16; 10, 1; 13,14), which is in contrast to Canaanite conceptions of a king (מלך).

66. Cf. Ibid., pp. 442-447.

67. H.H. Rowley, 'Zadok and Nehushtan', JBL lviii (1939) pp. 125-126. 137-139, also points out that the pre-Israelite priesthood of Jerusalem was validated for Israel and that Gen. 14 not merely

legitimates the Jerusalem priesthood but also the Jerusalem god, though it does not mention the shrine or the brazen sepent which was its symbol.

68. N. Lohfink, Die Landverheissung als Eid, p. 109, differentiates between the land-promise made to Abraham as an oath (Gen. 15) without any stipulations, and the land-promise made to the Exodus group in Gen. 34, 10ff., and connected with command and the demand for obedience not found in the former. Cf. H-P. Müller, 'Imperative und Verheissung im Alten Testament', EvTh. xxviii (1968) pp. 559-561, who discusses the connection between imperative and promise in Gen. 12, 1-3, a connexion which has caused difficulty for the exegetes. The Yahwist is perhaps doing this because he wants to bring together elements which were hitherto separate from one another. Promise belonged to the nomadic religion of the 'gods of the fathers' while command belongs to Exodus group of the Yahweh religion.

69. See above pp.228f and cf. Appendix, pp. 249-251.

70. See above p. 99.

71. Adding וּמִמִּצְרַיִם with 1 MS, LXX and Targum. See BHK^3 ad loc.

72. See above p. 60.

73. G. Wehmeier, Der Segen im Alten Testament, p. 205.

74. I Kings 12, 25-33. The words of Jeroboam to the people (v. 28), ' ..... Behold your God, O Israel, who brought you up from Egypt', appears to be Yahwehizing the Canaanite Baal. The bull images established by Jeroboam I point to the strong Canaanite influence in the north.

75. H.W. Wolff, 'Zur Thematik der elohistichen Fragmente im Pantateuch', Ev.Th. xxix (1969) pp. 62-67. Cf. G. Wehmeier, op. cit., who says that E characterizes life in the land of Canaan as a time of testing.

76. W. Staerk, Studien zur Religions- und Sprachgeschichte des alten

Testaments, vol. i, p. 35. Cf. R. Kilian, Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen, p. 312, who observes that no explicit promise of land for Abraham is attested in E.

77. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', JSS i (1956) p. 36, n. 1, suggests Hebron, and so also R.E. Clements, Abraham and David, p. 28.

78. Gen. 1, 28; 9, 1ff.; 17,16 : 28,4 refers to the blessing of Abraham, implying the promise given to Abraham in 17, 1-8. In 35,11 blessing is given as a command of El Shaddai.

79. The Elohist is subordinated to such an extent as to cause doubts about its existence as a separate source. Cf. P. Volz and W. Rudolf, Der Elohist als Erzähler - ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?, BZAW lxiii (1933). Cf. also C. Westermann, 'Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis', Forschung, pp. 10f.

80. H.W. Wolff, 'Zur Thematik der elohistischen Fragmente im Pentateuch', Ev.Th. xxix (1969) pp. 71f.

81. See above p. 213.

82. V. Maag, 'Malkut Jhwh', SVT vii (1960) p. 137, says that 'Israel achieved a syncretism between the religion of the nomad and the religion of the Canaanite peasant. It is through syncretism that it becmae what it was in the classical period'.

83. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 96, emphasizes the positive aspect of syncretism, as opposed to the common negative understanding of it, as the absorption or blending of one religion into another.

84. J. Lindblom, 'Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion', HUCA xxxii (1961) p. 91.

95. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 99-100; Hope and Planning, pp. 17-18.

86. W. Zimmerli, '"Offenbarung" im Alten Testament', EvTh. xxii (1962) p. 16.

87. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 100.

88. C. Westermann, Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche, p. 16, objects to this distinction and says that both of these ideas are connected with Yahweh.

89. See above pp. 109-111.

90. J. Moltmann, Hope and Planning, p. 18 says that the revelation of promise 'is connected with calling, commision and sending into historical service in the promised future.'

91. See above pp. 122.

92. J. Moltmann, Religion, Revolution and Future, pp. 25-27, makes a similar distinction between freedom in space and freedom in time. The western nations, according to him, sought freedom in space by migrating into the New World, while those who were left behind sought freedom in time through social revolutions to find the New Age in the future and thus initiated a means of changing the present into a glorious future without moving in space. This could well be applied to the religions of nomadic and sedentary peoples. Nomads sought salvation in moving to new pastures, whereas sedentary people worked in the place where they lived and co-operated with the deity in his creative activity in changing their environment.

93. G. von Rad, 'Typological interpretation of the Old Testament' Essays and Old Testament Interpretation, p. 34.

94. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 105; cf. Ibid, Religion, Revolution and the Future, p. 29.

95. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 104-106. Cf. also G. von Rad, 'There remains still a rest for the people of God', The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays, pp. 94ff.

96. See above pp. 147 and 150.

97. P. Altmann, Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Test-

ament, pp. 9-15. 18-20 and 30-31. Similarly, G.H. Davies, 'The Yahwistic tradition in the Eighth Century prophets' Studies in Old Testament Prophets, p. 44 observes that universalism is more prominent in J than in E.

98. See above p. 141.

99. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers', Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, pp. 28-29.

100. P. Altmann, op. cit., p. 11, objects to the title 'Call of Abraham' commonly used by the commentators for Gen. 12, 1-3, because he thinks that it does not contain a speech about 'the reunion of divided humanity'. It could, however, still be described as the call of Abraham in so far as it is concerned with a summons to co-operate in God's plan of salvation for all men.

101. See above p. 147.

102. H.W. Wolff, 'Zur Thematik der elohistichen Fragmente in Pentateuch', Ev.Th. xxix (1969) p. 72.

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